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ABSTRACT

The report presents six papers describing a Tennessee study to assess the status of the supported employment initiative, determine the importance and implementation of best practice elements, and ascertain perceptions of supported employment customers toward implementation. Major findings include the following: at the time of the study supported employment in Tennessee was in the resource phase of program development; 82 elements of best practice in supported employment were identified by a literature review and validated by a panel of experts; highest support was given to elements related to fiscal management, program personnel, community resources collaboration, quality of work, paid work, and on-going support; job supervisors were "satisfied" to "very satisfied" with the performance of the supported employees and the employment specialist; the majority of parents/caretakers reported being "satisfied" to "very satisfied" with supported employment. Issues identified include limited resources, limited implementation of best practices despite general agreement on their importance, little participation by severely disabled individuals in supported employment, and few students transitioning into supported employment directly from secondary special education. Most of the papers have references and appendices including relevant survey forms. (DB)

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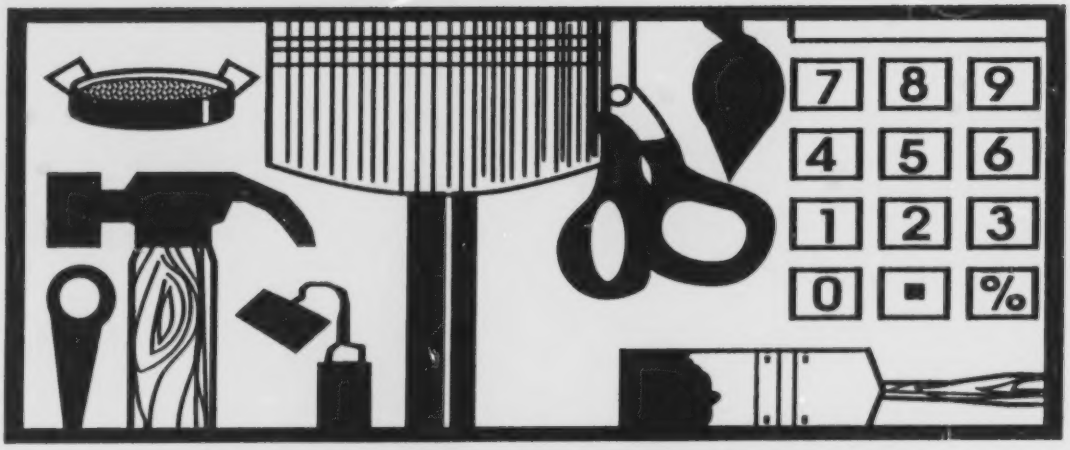

BEST PRACTICES IN SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

A STUDY OF THE TENNESSEE INITIATIVE

TENNESSEE INITIATIVE ON EMPLOYMENT
UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, MEMPHIS
UNIVERSITY AFFILIATED PROGRAM

sponsored by
Tennessee Developmental Disabilities Planning Council

Debra Martin Petty, Ed.D.
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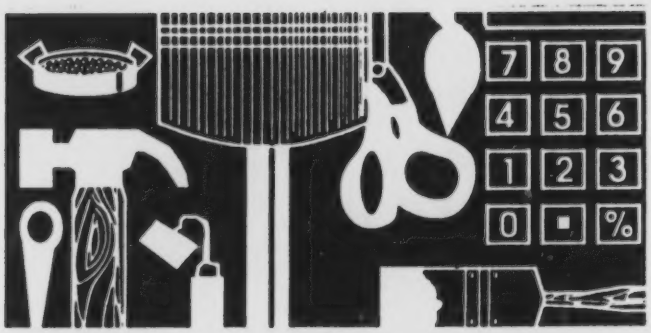

BEST PRACTICES IN SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT:

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DECEMBER, 1990

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Preface

The purpose of this monograph is to present the results of a study that sought to determine perceptions and opinions about supported employment in Tennessee from individuals who establish program policies and guidelines, implement the program, and utilize the services. More specifically, the results: 1) describe the opinions of state policymakers, program personnel, caseworkers, teachers, parents/caregivers, and job site supervisors about the current status of supported employment in Tennessee; and 2) identify the best practices these individuals think are important to delivering quality services to persons with severe disabilities. The Tennessee Initiative on Employment Project of the University of Tennessee, Boling Center for Developmental Disabilities conducted this comprehensive study from October 1989 through May 1990 with funding support from the Tennessee Developmental Disabilities Planning Council.

The Tennessee Initiative on Employment (TIE) project was organized in 1985 to form a state interagency management team on employment for persons with severe disabilities. The TIE Team consists of 41 representatives of state agencies, organizations, and related interest groups such as parents and employers. TIE has received federal funding from the Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD) and the Department of Labor (DOL), the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS), the Tennessee Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, and the Tennessee Division of Rehabilitation Services. It has also utilized national and regional resources as well as those of participating agencies/organizations to promote supported employment through information, planning, consumer services, program evaluation, and dissemination activities. Through collaborative efforts, the TIE Team has established and/or augmented most of the supported employment activities in Tennessee.

This monograph summarizes one of the most recent activities of the TIE Project and presents the initial benchmark data needed to evaluate the effectiveness of the supported employment program. Because of rapid expansion and changes in the field, the information in this monograph should be viewed only as a beginning, leaving little doubt that a reevaluation of perceptions about supported employment in Tennessee should occur 3-5 years from now.

There are six papers contained in this monograph. The first section is comprised of two papers that depict the status of supported employment from the perspective of policymakers and program personnel. Section II contains survey results that describe the perceptions of supported employment personnel toward the importance of validated supported employment best practice elements and the degree to which they perceive that these elements were implemented in supported employment programs. Section III of the monograph is devoted to customer evaluation of supported employment. Job site supervisors and parents/caregivers of the supported employment participants provided their opinions about the implementation of best practice elements. And, finally, the monograph contains a summary of the issues generated by the study and recommendations for improving the quality of supported employment in Tennessee.

As a research, planning, and development arm of the integrated employment initiative in Tennessee, the TIE Project embarked upon this project to provide a baseline of information for state planners and program-level developers to use as a guide. We hope this monograph will be useful and stimulate thoughts on future directions for supported employment in Tennessee.

Acknowledgements

This monograph would not have been possible without the information and candid opinions provided by the study respondents. We wish to thank all of the respondents who gave of their time to complete the surveys: the staff of mental retardation and mental health community agencies, private community agencies, state agency personnel, community mental retardation office personnel, rehabilitation regional supervisors and counselors, Least Restrictive Environment teachers, parents and caregivers, and job site supervisors.

We next wish to acknowledge ....

...the Tennessee Developmental Disabilities Planning Council for their funding support of this study as well as past and future activities of the Tennessee Initiative on Employment (TIE) Project.

...the TIE Management Team members for providing direction and support to the study and for their continued collaboration to promote the employment of persons with severe disabilities.

...the panel of reviewers for editing and validating the supported employment best practice elements: Dr. William Kiernan, Dr. Cynthia Langford, Mr. Kent Logan, Dr. David Mank, Dr. Larry Rhodes, Dr. Paul Wehman, and Ms. Gene Williams.

Third, we wish to thank ....

...community agencies for assisting in identifying the parent/caregiver and job site supervisor respondents of the study; also, LeWanna Edwards and Wes Martin of the Community Mental Retardation Agencies of Tennessee (CMRA), and Elizabeth Fussell of Douglas Cooperative, Inc. for conducting the interviews of job site supervisors.

...the research advisory team for their input into the development of the research questions, the design of the process, selection of respondents, and review of this monograph: Wanda Willis, Randall Moore, Patricia Nichols, Larry Grimes, Bill Wood, Dennis Wenner, and Frank Lee.

Finally, we thank Kim Rutherford for her high caliber of editorial work, Barbara Benjamin for her clerical contribution, and Dr. Jafar Alavi for conducting the statistical analyses. We are grateful to all of these people for their contribution to this monograph and look forward to continued collaborative efforts to improve the quality of work and lives of Tennesseans with severe disabilities.

Executive Summary

The Tennessee Initiative on Employment Project of the Boling Center for Developmental Disabilities was awarded a grant from the Tennessee Developmental Disabilities Planning Council to conduct a statewide study of best practices in supported employment between October 1, 1989 and May 31, 1990. The purposes of this study, in which policymakers, program personnel, caseworkers, teachers, job site supervisors, and parents/caregivers participated, were three-fold: (1) to assess the state and local status of the supported employment initiative; (2) to obtain opinions about the importance of pre-identified best practice elements of supported employment and to determine the level in which these elements were perceived as implemented by service providers; and (3) to ascertain the perceptions of supported employment customers—parents/caregivers and job-site supervisors—toward the implementation of supported employment.

The **Best Practices in Supported Employment** study has generated a wealth of information from the state and local perspective about the supported employment effort. A summary of the major significant findings of this study is as follows:

Current Status of the Supported Employment Initiative

- At the time of the study, supported employment in Tennessee was in the Resource phase of program development; that is, providers were establishing funds, staff, and program participants.
- State policymakers confirmed this initial development status as illustrated by their ratings of the following major system standards in need of a high degree of attention: making available a wide variety of jobs and training a sufficient number of skilled personnel to manage and operate supported employment.
- Recognizing the need to move beyond the initial phase of program development, state policymakers identified the following system standards that will lead to a more refined and

systematic delivery of supported employment: (a) establishing state management (funding systems for extending services, service coordination among key state agencies, state and local quality assurance system, linkage with the state's economic development plans), and (b) building consensus and participation (actively disseminating public information, increasing local system and county efforts through consensus building events, providing training to parents and advocates on supported employment issues, and facilitating interagency coordination with special education to promote student transitioning).

- Service providers were operating supported employment as an option among an array of vocational services with sheltered employment dominating the service scheme. This premise was based on data indicating that only 17% of the sheltered workshop/supported employment consumers were supported employment participants. Furthermore, the respondents estimated that only 10% of their total agency budget was spent on supported employment.

- Over 300 consumers were served in 23 supported employment programs during FY 1988-89. Of these, 75% (or 234) were placed into competitive, supported jobs. These consumers were unemployed or were employed in long-term sheltered programs prior to participating in supported employment.

- Primary disability data indicated that 61% of the participants were represented by persons with mental retardation and 22% with chronic mental illness. Of the persons with mental retardation, 31% of the population represented those with mild mental retardation while those with moderate and severe mental retardation were represented by 26% and 4% respectively.

- Most consumers were employed through a job coach approach in food service, janitorial, or industrial types of jobs and worked 25 hours or more per week for at least minimum wage. As a group, they achieved an 80% increase in hourly wages over wages earned prior to supported employment. However, 60% of the supported employees did not receive fringe benefits.

- Over 80% of the consumers were reported to have had more than one job. For those who had separated, poor social skills and inadequate work production and performance were frequently listed as the primary reasons.

Best Practice Elements in Supported Employment

- Resulting from an exhaustive literature review and a panel of experts validation process, 82 elements of best practices in supported employment were identified.

- There was agreement among the respondents that all of the best practice elements were important to service delivery. Some elements, however, received more support than others. Those elements that pertained to fiscal management, program personnel, community resources collaboration, quality of work, paid work, and on-going support

received higher endorsements of importance. Receiving less overall support were element subcategories concerned with program planning, school collaboration, program evaluation, assessment and job development, job analysis, and job site instruction.

- The total pattern of results indicated that all respondent groups perceived that Tennessee supported employment programs have not fully incorporated the best practice elements. As with the importance ratings, those elements addressing measurability and accountability received the lowest implementation ratings. Elements that focused on the development of funding, personnel, consumer, and employment resources had higher implementation ratings.

Customer Evaluation of Supported Employment

- Job site supervisors were satisfied to very satisfied with the performance of the supported employees and the support provided by the employment specialist. Most suggested that the program should be marketed across the state, especially to small business owners.
- As indicated by the job site supervisors, the supported employees were in line for pay increases, benefits, and increased responsibilities as were their counterparts; however, the possibility of advancement within the companies was considered limited.
- All supervisors reported that the supported employees were integrated into the work settings. In addition, they highly emphasized the importance of appropriate supervisor and employee interactions while on the job.
- The supervisors confirmed that the supported employees were receiving on-going support from employment specialists; however, they recommended that visits to the job site should be increased. They strongly stated that they would accept assistance from the employment specialist if the employee's performance dropped or other problems occurred.
- Supervisors were concerned about the limited qualifications or skills of the employment specialist. They suggested some ways in which employment specialists could improve their training and support to the consumer: conduct a job analysis and review with the supervisor before the employee begins the job, acquire the skills of the job before training the employee, receive training in management of multiple site placements, and identify fading techniques and discuss with the supervisor before reducing training and support time at the job site.
- Parents/caregivers reported that certain best practice elements were characteristic of the supported employment programs in which their family members participated. These elements included the availability of site training and long-term support, equivalent pay, job performance feedback, and respectful treatment of the family member.
- In contrast, parent/caregivers indicated that several best practice elements were not available in the supported employment programs such as assistance in the family

member's transitioning from school to the supported employment program, solicitation of parental participation, family assistance in using government financial benefits, and the existence of a program advisory committee.

- As for overall satisfaction, the majority of parents/caregivers reported being satisfied to very satisfied with supported employment. This was further supported by approximately one-quarter of the respondents who wrote positive comments concerning their family member's involvement in supported employment.

There is a considerable amount of work to be done to ensure that supported employment programs across the state offer quality services and that consumers with the most severe disabilities are program participants. However, it is quite clear that supported employment is the vehicle that has given many consumers the opportunity to participate in competitive work and community life. There should be little question that supported employment is becoming a significant option in the vocational array of services for Tennesseans with disabilities.

Debra Martin Petty

SECTION I: CURRENT STATUS OF THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE

Policymakers' Assessment of the Development of Supported Employment

Gregory C. Petty

Carolyn M. Henderson

Debra Martin Petty

Melinda Dukes

Policymakers' Assessment of the Development of Supported Employment

Supported employment for persons with severe disabilities was a topic of national importance during the latter part of the decade of the 80's. As the last decade of the 20th century begins, few federal programs have been as well received by every state in the union as has this national initiative to end joblessness among those with severe disabilities (Mank, Buckley, & Rhodes, 1990).

Shifting population demographics and a shortage of workers available to fill entry-level jobs have created a welcome demand for supported employment. New partnerships between employers and organizations serving persons with disabilities have created a fresh approach to job training and employment (Wehman, Kregel, & Shafer, 1989). Employers are embracing this new generation of reliable and dependable employees that was not previously considered appropriate for competitive employment (Mank, Buckley, & Rhodes, 1990).

Fundamental to this change as perceived by employers and those serving persons with disabilities has been a change in strategy at all levels of government. The systems for funding, regulations, and operating services have changed from serving people with severe disabilities in segregated day programs to integrated employment.

Central to the success of supported employment in Tennessee are the availability of opportunities for employment for persons with disabilities, adequate local service providers, effective state management and, finally, consensus and participation by agencies involved to serve those with severe disabilities in supported employment. Those people considered most

knowledgeable to judge the current status and weaknesses of these success criteria are the individuals closest to the heart of supported employment—the state policymakers.

As identified for the purpose of this study, the policymakers are members of the state Tennessee Initiative on Employment (TIE) Management Team who represent state agencies and organizations and regional or central administrators from the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation and the Division of Rehabilitation Services.

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to determine state policymakers' opinions with regard to the development of supported employment. To accomplish the stated purpose, two research questions were developed:

(1) How available are the standards of supported employment listed in the State Assessment of the Development of Supported Employment Options instrument as rated by policymakers in Tennessee?

(2) What degree of attention should be given to the standards of supported employment listed in the State Assessment of the Development of Supported Employment Options instrument as rated by policymakers in Tennessee?

Background of the Study

In 1985 the national initiative for employment of persons with severe disabilities successfully utilized systems change as a strategy for developing supported employment (U.S. Department of Education, 1985). These incentives were initiated by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) through five-year demonstration grants to ten states. An

additional 17 grants were awarded in 1986 through Title III of the Rehabilitation Act for a total of 27 states.

The systems change grants required interagency coordination and redirection of policy/funding to establish statewide supported employment programs. The models disseminated by these grants facilitated similar activities in other states. By using their own redirected resources, related funding from other federal agencies and, in 1988, Title VI-C formula grants, other states, including Tennessee, have been able to establish supported employment activities.

The effectiveness of supported employment activities must be documented and reported to assure continued funding. This documentation should focus on research into economic and quality of life improvements for those with developmental disabilities as well as various employment strategies (Stark, Schalock, & Berland, 1986). It is the policymakers as well as service providers who are accountable for the demonstrated effectiveness of supported employment (Stark, Schalock, & Berland, 1986). More specifically, the policymakers' perceptions of availability of program standards as well as their opinions as to the degree of attention that should be given to these standards are key issues for documenting the effectiveness of supported employment activities in Tennessee.

Method

This study was conducted by use of a mail-out survey to 42 policymakers. Surveys were mailed to participants in October 1989 with cover letters from appropriate agency heads. Postcard reminders were sent out two weeks later. For those not responding to the original survey within five weeks of the initial mailout, a replacement survey and cover letter

were sent. Follow-up telephone calls were made in November 1989 to remaining nonrespondents.

Instrumentation

Systems change to supported employment was identified by Bellamy, Rhodes, Mank, and Albin (1988) as structured upon four areas of accomplishment. Their study focused on statewide change through creating employment opportunities, developing local service providers, establishing state management systems, and building consensus and participation. These four areas of emphasis formed the basis for the instrument used in this study of Tennessee policymakers.

The instrument utilized for this study was the "State Assessment of the Development of Supported Employment Options," an adaptation of a tool designed by Mank, Buckley, and Rhodes (1990). It contains 19 items in four categories (Employment Opportunities, Local Service Providers, State Management, and Consensus and Participation) to be rated as to availability (LARGELY AVAILABLE, SOMEWHAT AVAILABLE, or NOT AVAILABLE) and degree of attention recommended (HIGH ATTENTION, MODERATE ATTENTION, or LOW ATTENTION). The adapted instrument was pre-tested by six representative policymakers in Tennessee.

The Policymakers' Assessment of the Development of Supported Employment was part of a study of "Best Practices in Supported Employment" (BPSE) sponsored by the Tennessee Initiative on Employment Project and funded by the Tennessee Developmental Disabilities Planning Council in FY 1989-90. Selected state policymakers, supported employment service providers, caseworkers, secondary special education teachers of Least

Restrictive Environment (LRE) classes, parents, and employers were surveyed to determine what they considered to be best practices in supported employment and to what degree best practices were being implemented in Tennessee. The Policymakers' Assessment specifically rated standards for evaluating the development of supported employment statewide on scales of availability and degree of attention recommended.

Policymakers also completed an "Importance" scale for elements of best practices in supported employment, the results of which were reported in "The Importance and Implementation of Best Practices Elements as Perceived by Supported Employment Professionals" section of the study.

Respondents

The respondents included members of the TIE Management Team (26) who represent state agencies and organizations and regional or central administrators from the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation and the Division of Rehabilitation Services (16). This resulted in a total of 42 policymakers which constituted the population of this study.

Data Analysis

Data were compiled, analyzed, interpreted, and summarized. Statistical analyses of the data included chi-squares, Pearson and Spearman correlations, Cochran-Mantel-Haenzel statistics, and other associated statistics. Interpretation was based primarily on descriptive statistics by analysis of tables and crosstabs since cell sizes were frequently too small to be valid for chi-squares.

The criteria for judging acceptance of "LARGELY AVAILABLE" or "HIGH ATTENTION" were set as 2.50 for means and 75% for percentages, consistent with the criteria for the BPSE analysis.

Results

From the population of 42 policymakers, a total of 38 or 90% of those surveyed responded to the scale. Two responses were not useable because of errors or omissions, yielding a total of 36 responses or an 86% useable response rate. The following results are based on this survey.

Demographic Information

Respondents provided background information on their education, jobs, and training in supported employment by a nine-item questionnaire included in the survey packets. Policymakers as a group were well educated with 86.1% holding graduate degrees. There was a wide distribution of experience in their fields, ranging from two to thirty-three years with 50% having more than twenty years and almost 25% having ten years or less. Of the 71.4% who were involved in the supported employment initiative, almost half had been involved for a year or less.

Half of the policymakers rated themselves as "in training," "novice," or "not very knowledgeable," which is similar to the rating of 54% by the BPSE respondents as a whole. Most of the knowledge acquired was reported to have been by workshops/conferences (72.2%), followed by on-the-job training (30.6%), journals (30.6%), special institutes (8.3%), graduate school (2.8%), and college (0%). The majority of policymakers did not

indicate very much interest in additional training on supported employment except through conferences (66.7%); ratings for other training formats were 22.2% for seminars, 13.9% for tele-courses, 13.9% for on-site technical assistance, and 2.8% for college credit.

Availability of Supported Employment Standards

The most salient finding on the availability scale, as seen in Table 1, is that none of the standards were ranked by the policymakers as LARGELY AVAILABLE in Tennessee using the 75% criterion or the 2.50 mean criterion established for this study. The highest item responded to as LARGELY AVAILABLE was "State locus of responsibility is established for supported employment and interagency agreements are operational" at 38.2% of respondents. This was followed by "A conversion plan is in place to increase the number of participants in supported employment by reducing the number of participants in adult day service programs (day activity, work activity, sheltered workshops) over time" at 32.4% and "Sufficient funding is available to allow new and existing service providers to establish supported employment programs" at 20.6% of respondents.

The five standards ranked most frequently on the availability scale by policymakers as NOT AVAILABLE were:

(1) Supported employment is tied to states' economic development plans. (65.6%)

(2) Local or county service system develops, promotes, supports and funds innovative employment options. (58.8%)

(3) State and local quality assurance system is developed and operational which promotes employment outcomes. (44.1%)

Table 1

Availability of Standards in Supported Employment as Perceived by Policymakers

Standard		Mean	Largely Available	Somewhat Available	Not Available
I.	**Create Employment Opportunities**				
1.	Supported employment in the private sector is widely available for people with disabilities across types of jobs.	1.85	0%	85.3%	14.7%
2.	Supported employment in the public sector is widely available across job types.	1.65	0%	64.7%	35.3%
3.	Incentives exist and are delivered to local organizations for generating access to paid employment.	1.91	8.8%	73.5%	17.6%
4.	Supported employment is tied to states' economic development plans.	1.41	6.3%	28.1%	65.6%
II.	**Develop Local Service Providers**				
5.	A sufficient number of skilled personnel are available to manage and operate supported employment options.	1.74	5.9%	61.8%	32.4%
6.	Sufficient funding is available to allow new and existing service providers to establish supported employment programs.	2.03	20.6%	61.8%	17.6%
7.	Individualized technical assistance is available as needed to assist providers statewide to develop and implement supported employment.	1.85	5.9%	73.5%	20.6%
III.	**Establish State Management**				
8.	State locus of responsibility is established for supported employment and interagency agreements are operational.	2.26	38.2%	50.0%	11.8%
9.	Funding system promotes development of supported employment and related agency funding systems are coordinated.	2.06	17.6%	70.6%	11.8%
10.	Service coordination and counseling systems (DD, MH, DRS) are coordinated to facilitate individual referrals to long-term supported employment vs. short-term employment training.	1.94	14.7%	64.7%	20.6%
11.	Local or county service system develops, promotes, supports and funds innovative employment options.	1.41	0%	41.2%	58.8%
12.	State and local quality assurance system is developed and operational, which promotes employment outcomes.	1.65	8.8%	47.1%	44.1%
13.	An information system is in place for collecting and reporting data related to supported employment outcomes.	1.88	18.2%	51.5%	30.3%

(Table 1 continues)

Standard		Mean	Largely Available	Somewhat Available	Not Available
IV.	**Build Consensus and Participation**				
14.	Individuals with disabilities and advocates actively participate statewide in planning and monitoring supported employment options.	1.73	3.0%	66.7%	30.3%
15.	Public information and dissemination mechanisms are in place statewide which promote supported employment to the general public, the legislature, and potential employers.	1.65	0%	64.7%	35.3%
16.	Service providers and other professionals are committed to supported employment and consensus building events are planned and conducted.	2.00	14.7%	70.6%	14.7%
17.	Information and training is available for parents, advocates, and other related supported employment issues.	1.76	5.9%	64.7%	29.4%
18.	A conversion plan is in place to increase the number of participants in supported employment by reducing the number of participants in adult day service programs (day activity, work activity, sheltered workshops) over time.	2.09	32.4%	44.1%	23.5%
19.	Interagency coordination with special education at the state and local level is in place to facilitate student transition from school to adult supported employment services.	1.91	12.1%	66.7%	21.2%

(4) Public information and dissemination mechanisms are in place statewide and promote supported employment to the general public, the legislature, and potential employers. (35.5%)

(5) Supported employment in the **public** sector is widely available across job types. (35.3%)

Items where the responses were inconclusive include:

(1) An information system is in place for collecting and reporting data related to supported employment outcomes (18.2%). This item is highly controversial; although rated LARGELY AVAILABLE by 18.2% of the policymakers, it was rated NOT AVAILABLE by 30.3%.

(2) Funding system promotes development of supported employment and related agency funding systems are coordinated; 17.6% rated as LARGELY AVAILABLE, 11.8% NOT AVAILABLE, and 70.6% SOMEWHAT AVAILABLE.

Supported Employment Standards That Need Attention

Policymakers rated several of the standards items highly with regard to degree of attention needed for these standards. In particular, it should be noted that all but three of the standards exceeded the 2.50 mean criterion for significance. In addition every standard but two was rated by more than half (50%) of the respondents as needing HIGH ATTENTION (Table 2).

Five standards on the attention scale meeting both the pre-established 75% and the 2.50 mean criteria as needing HIGH ATTENTION were:

(1) Interagency coordination with special education at the state and local level is in place to facilitate student transition from school to adult supported employment services. (84.8%)

(2) A sufficient number of skilled personnel are available to manage and operate supported employment options. (82.4%)

(3) Supported employment in the private sector is widely available for people with disabilities across types of jobs. (79.4%)

(4) Supported employment in the public sector is widely available across job types. (79.4%)

Table 2

Attention that Should be Given to Standards in Supported Employment as Perceived by Policymakers

Standard		Mean	High Attention	Moderate Attention	Low Attention
I.	**Create Employment Opportunities**				
1.	Supported employment in the private sector is widely available for people with disabilities across types of jobs.	2.76[a]	79.4%[b]	17.6%	2.9%
2.	Supported employment in the public sector is widely available across job types.	2.79[a]	79.4%[b]	20.6%	0%
3.	Incentives exist and are delivered to local organizations for generating access to paid employment.	2.59[a]	61.8%	35.3%	2.9%
4.	Supported employment is tied to states' economic development plans.	2.41	46.9%	46.9%	6.3%
II.	**Develop Local Service Providers**				
5.	A sufficient number of skilled personnel are available to manage and operate supported employment options.	2.82[a]	82.4%[b]	17.6%	0%
6.	Sufficient funding is available to allow new and existing service providers to establish supported employment programs.	2.64[a]	66.7%	30.3%	3.0%
7.	Individualized technical assistance is available as needed to assist providers statewide to develop and implement supported employment.	2.71[a]	73.5%	23.5%	2.9%
III.	**Establish State Management**				
8.	State locus of responsibility is established for supported employment and interagency agreements are operational.	2.44	52.9%	38.2%	8.8%
9.	Funding system promotes development of supported employment and related agency funding systems are coordinated.	2.74[a]	76.5%[b]	20.6%	2.9%
10.	Service coordination and counseling systems (DD, MH, DRS) are coordinated to facilitate individual referrals to long-term supported employment vs. short-term employment training.	2.65[a]	70.6%	23.5%	5.9%
11.	Local or county service system develops, promotes, supports and funds innovative employment options.	2.50[a]	55.9%	38.2%	5.9%
12.	State and local quality assurance system is developed and operational, which promotes employment outcomes.	2.53[a]	52.9%	47.1%	0%
13.	An information system is in place for collecting and reporting data related to supported employment outcomes.	2.62[a]	64.7%	32.4%	2.9%

(Table 2 continues)

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Standard		Mean	High Attention	Moderate Attention	Low Attention
IV.	**Build Consensus and Participation**				
14.	Individuals with disabilities and advocates actively participate statewide in planning and monitoring supported employment options.	2.38	41.2%	55.9%	2.9%
15.	Public information and dissemination mechanisms are in place statewide which promote supported employment to the general public, the legislature, and potential employers.	2.71[a]	70.6%	29.4%	0%
16.	Service providers and other professionals are committed to supported employment and consensus building events are planned and conducted.	2.62[a]	64.7%	32.4%	2.9%
17.	Information and training is available for parents, advocates, and other related supported employment issues.	2.68[a]	67.6%	32.4%	0%
18.	A conversion plan is in place to increase the number of participants in supported employment by reducing the number of participants in adult day service programs (day activity, work activity, sheltered workshops) over time.	2.68[a]	67.6%	32.4%	0%
19.	Interagency coordination with special education at the state and local level is in place to facilitate student transition from school to adult supported employment services.	2.85[a]	84.8%[b]	15.2%	0%

[a] Meets criterion of 2.50 or more
[b] Meets criterion of 75% or more

(5) Funding system promotes development of supported employment and related agency funding systems are coordinated. (76.5%)

All but three of the standards on the attention scale met the 2.50 mean criterion established for this study. The three **not** meeting this HIGH ATTENTION required criterion were "Individuals with disabilities and advocates actively participate statewide in planning and monitoring supported employment options" (mean = 2.38); "Supported employment is tied to states' economic development plans" (mean = 2.41); and "State locus of responsibility is established for supported employment and interagency agreements are operational" (mean = 2.44).

Discussion

Supported employment services in Tennessee have had a varied and unstructured beginning. This changed under the 1987 guidelines established by federal regulations on supported employment and the 1988 Division of Rehabilitation Services procedural guidelines governing Tennessee Title VI-C programs. However, little was known about the current availability of services to persons with severe disabilities and the relative attention that should be given to develop these services.

This study has attempted to answer the following questions:

(1) How available are standards of supported employment options listed in the State Assessment of the Development of Supported Employment Options instrument as rated by policymakers in Tennessee?

(2) What degree of attention should be given to standards of supported employment options listed in the State Assessment of the Development of Supported Employment Options instrument as rated by policymakers in Tennessee?

It seems clear from the responses of the policymakers that these nationally accepted standards are considered to be **not** currently available in Tennessee. In particular, those standards related to "Creating Employment Opportunities" are considered lacking. Not one standard in this category was rated higher than 2.0 on a 1.0 to 3.0 scale. The most salient point is that policymakers do not think that supported employment is tied to Tennessee's economic development plans.

Tennessee's economic development plans are set in the state capitol and consider options for attracting new employment opportunities to the state. The Saturn and Nissan

plants as well as numerous high technology firms locating in Tennessee are a direct result of this effort by state leaders, lawmakers, and bureaucrats. It seems evident that efforts need to be made to encourage state politicians to embrace laws and mandates as wholeheartedly as have Tennessee private industry employers. In other words, Tennessee should make a **concerted** effort to include services of supported employment in its economic development plans. If such plans exist on paper then efforts should be made to inform state policymakers and service providers of these plans. Certainly, at the least, a dialogue between state staff involved with supported employment and staff involved with Tennessee's economic development plans needs to begin.

Another area of concern revealed by this survey is that of "Establishing State Management." Though the respondents seemed to agree that there is a limited level of state locus of responsibility for supported employment and interagency agreements, they also agreed that local or county service systems **should** develop, promote, support, and fund innovative employment options. Not one policymaker thought this latter standard was largely available and 56% thought it needed high attention. Apparently the policymakers feel the local and county systems are not exerting the efforts required to effectively deliver programs to those with severe disabilities.

A standard under "Building Consensus and Participation" rated as needing high attention was that of interagency coordination with special education at the state and local level to facilitate student transition from school to adult supported employment. Policymakers agree that this coordination should exist and needs attention given to it. Perhaps their rating on this standard reflects their frustration with coordinating with public-

school-based special education personnel. However, since 67% of the respondents think this coordination is currently somewhat available, this assumption cannot be substantiated with the data available from this study.

Another interesting conclusion is related to the "Development of Local Service Providers." An overwhelming majority (82%) think the standard regarding a sufficient number of skilled personnel available to manage and operate supported employment options needs to be given high attention. However, 62% think this standard is currently somewhat available. Perhaps this seemingly conflicting response reflects what policymakers think will be a need or shortage in the future for sufficiently skilled and trained personnel.

Policymakers do seem consistent with their responses to the standards relating to supported employment in the private and public sectors and its availability across types of jobs (Q1 and Q2). They rated both of these items as needing high attention (79% for both) and either not available (15% and 35%) or somewhat available (85% and 65%). Clearly, they are concerned about the availability of supported employment opportunities for different job types in the private and public sectors in Tennessee.

In summary, policymakers seem to feel that continuing efforts need to be made to create employment opportunities, develop local service providers, establish state management, and build consensus and participation in Tennessee. Their responses to the survey reveal that Tennessee currently has limited availability of these services and that efforts should be made to expand these services by giving them high attention in the future.

Future Implications

Based on the findings of this study and current national research studies available at the time of this publication, the following implications are submitted:

1. Supported employment is here to stay and the state needs to give more attention to standards related to effective delivery of services to persons with severe disabilities.
2. Many nationally accepted standards of supported employment are not currently available in Tennessee—a condition which could affect the state's competitiveness in the delivery of future economic development plans.
3. Coordination of program services at the state and local level, particularly with special education, is critical at this embryonic stage of development for supported employment services in Tennessee.
4. Training and education for the continued development of skilled personnel to coordinate, deliver, develop, and operate supported employment programs are important for the success of supported employment directives.
5. Statewide coordination efforts will be required to continue supported employment in Tennessee.
6. Centralized coordination and management of supported employment, particularly in harmony with other state agencies, will be necessary for the success of supported employment.
7. Supported employment personnel must make efforts to coordinate and "market" the goals, objectives, and delivery mechanisms of supported employment with personnel responsible for Tennessee's economic development plans.

8. Supported employment personnel should work with private and public sector employers to expand job opportunities and job types available to persons with severe disabilities.
9. State level supported employment personnel should work with county service system personnel to help them develop, promote, and support innovative employment options.
10. State level supported employment personnel should work with local and county service delivery personnel to help them develop a quality assurance system to promote employment outcomes.

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Supported Employment Program Status

as Reported by Program Personnel

Debra Martin Petty

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Supported Employment Program Status
as Perceived by Program Personnel

For July 1, 1988 to September 30, 1989

Since the mid-1980s, Tennessee service providers have reported the provision of integrated employment for persons with severe disabilities. Influenced by research, federal initiatives, demonstration projects, and in-service training activities, these service providers are moving toward providing employment services that are described as integrated in the competitive job market with job-site training and supportive services intended to help individuals maintain their job over time. Some service providers have sought a variety of funding sources (e.g., Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) Title I establishment grants, JTPA grants, Developmental Disability Planning Council grants) and have reallocated existing funding (i.e., the Division of Mental Retardation) to expand their employment service options and to increase the quality of work and life opportunities of the individuals they served.

It has been reported that integrated employment services were provided to persons with disabilities prior to the establishment of federal supported employment guidelines and formula grant funding from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). September of 1988 marked the beginning of supported employment programs in Tennessee as defined by the Title I, Part C of the 1986 Amendments to the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973. At this time, 16 service providers received Title I, Part C funding from the Tennessee Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) to implement supported employment services; and for the first time supported employment was defined and program parameters were

established. The initiative began to grow. In July of 1989, 12 additional service providers contracted with DRS and 16 service providers were added in September of 1989. These 44 service providers operated 269 supported employment slots that were targeted for persons with severe disabilities. The DRS supported employment contract budget was over 1.2 million dollars.

To this point, there was little available documentation on supported employment activities. As a part of the Best Practices in Supported Employment study, The Tennessee Initiative on Employment Project (TIE) was interested in learning about the activities which occurred during the initial phase of the DRS supported employment program. Consequently, a survey was conducted of service providers to answer the following questions:

1. Who are the consumers of supported employment?
2. What impact has supported employment had on the lives of the consumers?
3. How has supported employment affected the operations of participating adult day service providers?

Method

Respondents

Several months prior to the survey, TIE Project staff interviewed key staff of the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, the Division of Rehabilitation Services, and the Community Mental Retardation Association to help identify service providers in Tennessee who were providing supported employment services to persons with severe disabilities. Based on these interviews, a mailing list was compiled which consisted

of 36 executive directors of agencies which had operated supported employment programs before September 30, 1989. The service providers who began providing supported employment after this date were not included in the survey since they were thought to be in the start-up phase of offering supported employment services.

Instrument Development

A literature review and input from a study advisory committee resulted in the development of items for the Supported Employment Program Status survey instrument. The survey instrument was modeled after the National Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (NARF) Survey of Supported Employment which was used in a national survey conducted in June of 1988. Pertinent items were taken from this survey instrument and revised; other items were generated by the researchers to measure specific outcomes.

The survey instrument (see Appendix) consisted of 40 items that were grouped by organization characteristics, referral and funding sources, consumer and employer characteristics, and summary evaluation of supported employment. Several response formats were utilized, i.e., numerical responses, open-ended questions, and rating scales, to obtain answers to the study questions.

The respondents were asked to carefully review operational definitions of supported employment and supported employment approaches (i.e., enclave, entrepreneurial, mobile work crew, job coach, job partner) that were included in the directions. The definition of supported employment from Section 7 of the 1986 Amendments (PL 99-506) to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was cited. However, the requirements to qualify as a provider

of supported employment as defined in the 1986 Amendments were not cited; hence, the interpretation of requirements was left to the discretion of the respondent.

Procedure

The survey process began October 1, 1989 and follow-up procedures were completed by December 31, 1989. The 36 identified agency executive directors were mailed the Program Status Survey along with a cover letter describing the purpose of the survey. Two weeks following the initial mailing, a postcard was sent as a thank you for those who had responded and as a reminder for those who had not. A second and final follow-up was conducted three weeks after the postcard was mailed. Telephone calls were made once the surveys were received to verify any responses that were unclear to the researchers.

Results

Of the 36 surveys mailed to executive directors of 28 mental retardation agencies, 7 mental health agencies, and 1 United Cerebral Palsy Center, 30 surveys were returned. An 83% return rate was achieved; 23 surveys were deemed useable for data analysis. It was noted that some executive directors chose to forward the survey to the staff person in charge of supported employment services.

Organizational Characteristics

Many respondents (19) reported that they began operating their supported employment program between 1986 and 1988 (9 in 1988, 6 in 1987, 4 in 1986). One supported employment program was reported to have begun as early as 1984. It was indicated that staff of the supported employment programs included managers, job trainers, and follow

along specialists. The average staff composition (as reported by 60.9%) was one manager, two job trainers, and a 50% follow along specialist.

The consumers entered the 23 supported employment programs from a variety of settings and situations: 23% came from long-term sheltered employment settings, 19% had participated in non-work day programs, 18% were referred by vocational rehabilitation, and 17% had been unemployed. Only 6 consumers attended school immediately prior to entering a supported employment program.

Referral and funding sources. There were 16 (or 69.4%) respondents who indicated that when a participant in their organization's sheltered program moved into their supported employment program, the vacant slot was routinely filled within six months. Three (13%) respondents indicated that the slot was routinely eliminated, and four (17.4%) reported that they did not have a sheltered program.

Most of the respondents reported that their funding sources for supported employment were vocational rehabilitation (91.3%) for short-term training and mental retardation (73.9%) for long-term support. Other sources of funding for short-term services included JTPA (21.7%) and revenue generated by sales of products (17.4%). United Way (39.1%) and mental health (13%) were other sources used to fund long-term support. The respondents felt that there were constraints imposed on their utilization of these funds. Also, funding constraints about time frames (68%), type of services provided (21.7%), and eligibility of target populations (18%) were indicated. The majority reported that 10% of the total organization budget was spent on the supported employment program.

Consumer Characteristics and Employment Outcomes

The respondents were asked questions about characteristics of the consumers they served in supported employment and their employment outcomes for the program period of July 1, 1988 - September 30, 1989. The respondents reported that 312 consumers were participating in supported employment with an average of 13 per program (range of 5 to 39). To establish a basis for comparison, they were asked to determine the number of consumers employed in their sheltered workshops. A total of 1578 sheltered workshop employees was indicated by 17 respondents with an average number of 93 per program (range of 15 to 278). Of the 1880 consumers served in sheltered workshops and supported employment, only 17% (312) were participants of supported employment programs.

Consumer characteristics. An average description of the supported employment participants as reported by the respondents is shown in Table 1. Both females and males were about equally represented in the 23 programs. The most frequently reported age category was 22-30 followed by 31-40. Most respondents reported that the consumers experienced either mild mental retardation (30.7%), moderate mental retardation (25.9%), or chronic mental illness (22%) as their primary disability. Approximately 17% of the consumers were reported to have multiple handicaps.

The majority of the consumers received medicaid/medicare entitlements (87.3%) and SSI/SSDI payments (82.2%) before entering the supported employment programs. At the time they entered the supported employment programs, over half of the consumers lived with relatives or guardians, 25% lived independently, and 12% lived in group home settings with

Table 1

Supported Employment Participant Characteristics

Characteristic	*Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	184	59.0
Female	128	41.0
Average Age		
Under 18	1	3.0
18-21	44	15.1
22-30	136	46.7
31-40	100	34.4
41-64	10	3.4
Over 65	0	0.0
Primary Disability		
Mild MR	95	30.7
Moderate MR	80	25.9
Severe MR	14	4.5
Chronically MI	68	22.0
Multiply Handicapped	52	16.8
Financial Benefits		
Medicaid/Medicare	208	87.3
SSI, SSDI	226	82.2
Residence		
Lives independently	65	24.5
Lives with relatives or guardians	144	54.3
Lives with 7 or fewer other residents; part-time supervision	19	7.2
Lives with 7 or fewer other residents; full-time supervision	5	1.9
Lives with more than 7 other residents; full-time supervision	32	12.1
Primary Transportation Usage		
Independent use of public transportation	34	14.9
Walks/rides bike or moped	32	14.0
Dependent use of public transportation	0	0.0
Arranged car pool	0	0.0
Parent/friend drives	31	13.6
Handicapped transportation	0	0.0
Transported by your organization	93	40.8
Other (drives own car)	38	16.7

* Frequency totals vary among the characteristics due to respondent estimations.

full-time supervision. It was reported that 33 (12%) consumers progressed to less supervised living situations after being employed.

Many consumers depended on the supported employment program or their parents to transport them to work. Ninety-three consumers were transported by their agency. There were indications of consumers expressing their independence and high capabilities by the types of transportation utilized. Twenty-nine individuals drove their own cars, 34 independently used public transportation, and 32 walked or rode their bike/moped to work.

Employment outcomes. As shown in Table 2, 234 consumers were placed into paid supported employment during 1988-1989; 75% of the 312 consumers served were job placed. Consumers were most frequently employed in food, janitorial, or industrial (factory) types of companies and held food service, janitorial/maintenance, light industry, and child care positions. Respondents reported that 134 different employers provided work for one or more supported employees. Of these employers, 45 received Targeted Jobs Tax Credit (TJTC) or similar financial incentives to employ workers with disabilities.

Over half of the employees worked an average of 25 or more hours per week. The hourly wages of the employed consumers ranged from $2.45 to $4.50 per hour; total average hourly wage was $3.63. Prior to supported employment the average hourly wage was $2.96. The reported prior hourly wages were as low as $.75 per hour to the top wage of $3.66 per hour. The majority of the employees were paid directly by their employer while 17% were paid through employer-agency contracts. Two consumers were reported to have received 50% of their pay for the first six weeks of employment from JTPA. Employers provided fringe benefits to 40% of the supported employees.

Table 2

Employment Outcomes of Supported Employment Participants

Characteristic	*Frequency	Percent
Served in SE programs	312	100.0
Placed into paid SE	234	75.0
Type of position		
Food service	69	29.9
Janitorial/maintenance	58	25.1
Light industry	31	13.4
Child care	23	10.0
Lawn care	13	5.6
Stock person	12	5.2
Clerical	8	3.5
Laundry	2	.9
Other	15	6.4
Average hours worked		
< 20 hours	18	7.7
20-24 hours	84	35.7
25-34 hours	49	20.9
35 or more	84	35.7
Wages		
Average hourly wage prior to SE range ($.75 to $3.66)	$2.96	
Average hourly wage with SE range ($2.45 - $4.50)	$3.63	
Received fringe benefits	75	40.1
Source of employee's wages		
SE program	38	17.0
Employer	184	82.0
Other	2	.9
SE approach		
Job coach	166	68.6
Mobile work crew	55	22.7
Enclave	19	7.9
Job partner	1	.4
Entrepreneurial	0	0
Other	1	.4
Level of integration		
Worked along with workers without disabilities	182	76.8
Integration at lunch and breaks only	43	18.1
No opportunities for integration	12	5.1

* Frequency totals vary among the characteristics due to respondent estimations.

Eight respondents indicated that the participants were employed seven months or longer; fifteen reported that the participants had held jobs six months or less. This was perhaps due to the limited amount of time the supported employment programs had been in operation at the time the survey was conducted. It was reported that 52 employees had more than one job placement; 9 had held only one job. As shown in Table 3, these supported employees had separated from their jobs for such reasons as poor social skills and adaptation (25%), laid off for lack of work (21%), and inadequate work production and performance (21%).

Table 3

Reported Reasons for Consumer Job Separation

Characteristic	Frequency	Percent
Poor social skills/adaptation	13	25.0
Laid off for lack of work	11	21.2
Production too low/performance inadequate	11	21.2
Quit for a better job	6	11.5
Quit for medical reasons	5	9.6
Quit due to loss of transportation	4	7.7
Lost job when business closed	1	1.9
Unsatisfactory attendance due to transportation	1	1.9
Quit due to relocation of residence	0	0.0
Felt socially isolated on the job	0	0.0
TOTAL	52	100.0

Most respondents (68.6%) indicated that they used a job coach approach to assist consumers learn the job and maintain it over time; and they felt that this approach was the

most cost effective when compared to mobile work crew, enclave, entrepreneurial, and job partner approaches (see Table 2). An average of 295 staff intervention hours per supported employment case was estimated by 16 respondents. The breakdown of staff intervention hours is shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Staff Intervention Hours Per Supported Employment Case

Intervention Hours	Respondent Frequency
1 - 20	5
21 - 80	2
81 - 200	5
201 - 400	3
over*	1

*One respondent reported 2880 hours of intervention.

Concerning level of integration at the workplace, the respondents reported that 182 consumers worked alongside workers without disabilities and had opportunities for integration at breaks and lunch (see Table 2). Integration at breaks and lunch only was achieved by 43 individuals; 12 had no opportunity to integrate during work, breaks, or lunch.

At the time of the survey it was anticipated by the researchers that many of the consumers had not completed their DRS time-limited training and had not begun to receive follow along services. Therefore, the respondents were asked to project the type of support

services the employees might need while in the follow along status. As shown in Table 5, 14 different types of follow along services were indicated. The most frequently mentioned were services that may have a negative impact on the consumer's job retention if assistance was not available: money management, transportation, job counseling, medical follow-up, living skills training, and social security help.

Table 5

Type of Follow Along Services Needed by Supported Employees as Projected by the Respondents

Characteristic	Frequency	Percent
Money management	22	11.4
Transportation	20	10.4
Job counseling	17	8.8
Medical follow up	15	7.8
Living skills training	15	7.8
Social security help	15	7.8
Counseling	13	6.7
Recreation	12	6.2
Housing development	11	5.7
Housing location	11	5.7
Housing monitoring	11	5.7
Job change	10	5.2
Additional vocational training	10	5.2
Family life	7	3.6
Other	4	2.0
TOTAL	193	100.0

Summary Evaluation of Supported Employment

The respondents were asked to evaluate supported employment by (a) providing their opinions on why supported employment is preferred over sheltered employment, (b) identifying problems they encountered that impede the development of supported employment, and (c) identifying changes that may help them do a better job of providing supported employment. The most important factors that influenced their opinion of supported employment were those that influenced consumers in a positive way: building of self-esteem, individualized programming approaches, higher wages than in sheltered employment, and normal life and work experience.

Next, the respondents were asked to indicate problems that they have encountered that impede the development and continuation of supported employment. Of 12 pre-determined impediments, consumer transportation difficulties was rated by the majority as the most severe (see Table 6). Loss of SSI/SSDI benefits to consumers, inadequate funds in general, resistance to change by consumers' family/caregiver, and uncertainty of new funding or instability of current funding were among the five most severe impediments.

Finally, the respondents were asked to identify changes they would like to see, either within their own program or in the support their program received from outside sources that could help them do a more effective job. Receiving more money (40.5%), more staff training (20.3%), and flexibility in funding guidelines (19.0%) were changes identified most frequently. Other changes included better MH/MR and DRS state/county cooperation (15.2%), provision of on-site technical assistance (10.3%), and trying new approaches to

Table 6

Impediments to the Development and Continuation of Supported Employment

Impediment	*Mean Score	Rank Order
Consumer transportation difficulties	4.35	1
Loss of SSI/SSDI benefits to consumers	3.43	2
Inadequate funds in general	3.33	3
Resistance to change by consumer's family/caregiver	3.30	4
Uncertainty of new funding/instability of current funding	2.95	5
Lack of available jobs	2.86	6
Lack of experienced direct support staff	2.83	7
Negative employer attitudes	2.81	8
Ability to serve consumers with severe disabilities	2.57	9
Threat of operating revenue loss from reduction of other activities	2.23	10
Lack of support from administration	1.53	11
Resistance from agency board of directors/trustees	1.48	12

*Mean score based on a five-point scale: 5 = high severity, 1 = low severity.

supported employment (9.0%). Serving more consumers with severe disabilities was mentioned by only 5% of the respondents.

Discussion

This study was designed to provide answers to three major questions that were considered essential to learning about the start-up phase of supported employment in Tennessee. These questions were concerned with describing the consumers of supported employment, the impact of supported employment on their quality of work and life, and the effect supported employment has had on the array of vocational services offered by adult day service providers. It is hoped that the results of the study will provide policymakers and others with a body of information which describes the successes as well as identifies the shortcomings of the Tennessee supported employment program that must be addressed before the program can improve in quality.

There were limitations of this study that narrow the interpretation of the results. Like other mail surveys, this study relied on the respondents' reporting of supported employment activities within their agencies which may have resulted in inflated or inaccurate estimations. Follow-up efforts were attempted by the researchers to obtain more accurate information when a questionable response was made.

Another limitation was the respondents' interpretation of the supported employment term. The respondents were instructed to keep in mind the RSA supported employment definition when responding to each question (definition was included on the survey), and surveys were sent to respondents who were noted to have supported employment programs that were operating by the RSA Title VI, Part C guidelines. However, we feel quite certain

that other consumers who were placed in integrated employment settings with job coach support and did not participate in the Title VI-C supported employment program were included in the respondents' data tally.

Regardless of these limitations, we feel that the data reveal the most comprehensive picture about the Tennessee effort obtained to date given that this study was the first attempt to collect statewide data about the supported employment initiative. The remainder of this section will focus on a discussion of the collected data.

Consumers of Supported Employment

Over 300 consumers were served in supported employment programs during FY 1988-89. On average, these consumers were both women and men (about equally represented), were between the ages of 22 and 30, and experienced mild or moderate mental retardation or chronic mental illness. Prior to entering supported employment programs, most consumers were unemployed or were employed in long-term sheltered programs. As recipients of social security payments and medical entitlements, they lived with relatives or guardians, and 12% had actually progressed to a less supervised living situation after being competitively employed with support. They typically depended heavily on service providers to transport them to work; probably due to limited transportation services within the state.

Impact of Supported Employment on Consumers

The supported employment initiative has been successful as indicated by the basic employment outcomes (i.e., wages per hour, hours per week, level of integration achieved by the participants). There were 234 consumers employed in food service, janitorial, or

industrial types of jobs who worked beyond the 20 hours per week minimum requirement. Most consumers worked 25 hours or more per week at minimum wage and increased their hourly wages by 80% above wages obtained prior to supported employment. However, 60% did not receive fringe benefits.

Characteristic of supported employment is the provision of support to assist consumers obtain and maintain employment over time. Over 80% of the consumers obtained more than one job, which illustrated that the service providers were committed to working with consumers to obtain the right job match. For those who had separated from jobs, poor social skills and inadequate work production and performance were frequently listed as the primary reasons.

Although it was reported that over 70% of the consumers were fully integrated at the workplace, perhaps there was a stronger emphasis on physical integration over social integration, which may have resulted in consumers exhibiting poor social skills. Job separation due to inadequate work production and performance may indicate that more time should be spent at the workplace measuring work production and developing strategies for improving performance.

Effect of Supported Employment on Providers

The supported employment initiative has undergone considerable growth since 1988. As never before, service providers are networking with employers in their local communities in order to enhance the lives of the consumers they serve. Service providers have witnessed the positive outcomes of supported employment (i.e., increased self-esteem, higher wages,

and individualized programming) revealing that they value improved work and life styles for consumers with disabilities.

But the conversion from day vocational services to integrated employment is a slow process for our state. Most service providers are routinely filling sheltered employment slots as the consumers move into supported employment, which perpetuates the focus of staff time on sheltered services. The number of consumers participating in supported employment pales in comparison to the respondents' estimate of the sheltered employment census. The data clearly indicate that supported employment services represent the exception rather than the rule. Supported employment is operating as an option among an array of vocational services with sheltered employment dominating the service scheme. It is estimated from this data that only 17% of the sheltered/supported employment consumers were supported employment participants. Furthermore, most respondents indicated that only 10% of their total agency budget was spent for supported employment.

Perhaps there are several reasons for the slow conversion. It appears that many service providers remain committed to offering sheltered employment services, and at the time of this study they viewed supported employment as a "new entity" and were interested in limited involvement. Many report that there is inadequate funding for supported employment, and that there are several program constraints associated with the funding such as time frames, types of services provided, and populations eligible for services. Other impediments to the development of supported employment may be that providers are faced with transportation difficulties, family/caregiver resistance to change, perceived loss of social security benefits to consumers, and limited resources for long-term support services.

programs. Finally, training must be provided to improve program interfacing with public and private sectors in local communities. This includes interfacing with employers, parents/caregivers, transportation providers, and school personnel to develop transitional program plans.

There is a considerable amount of work to be done to ensure that supported employment programs across the state offer quality services and that consumers with the most severe disabilities are program participants. However, it is quite clear that supported employment is the vehicle that has given many consumers the opportunity to participate in competitive work and community life. There should be little question that supported employment is becoming a significant option in the vocational array of services for Tennesseans with disabilities.

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Appendix

Supported Employment Program Status Survey

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM STATUS

Directions: The following items will give us information about your supported employment program. Please answer each item to the best of your knowledge by either circling the number which best describes your response or by filling in the blanks. If your response is something other than the listed responses, please circle "Other" and specify what other means. Feel free to make a note in the margin to clarify your response.

As you answer the following items, please keep in mind the following definitions:

DEFINITIONS

Supported Employment: Competitive work in integrated work settings for individuals with severe handicaps for whom competitive employment has not occurred, or for whom competitive employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a severe disability and who, because of their handicap, require ongoing support services to perform such work; **Sec. 7, 1986 amendments (PL 99-506) to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.**

Enclave: Small group of persons with severe disabilities working together in an integrated setting with supervision.

Entrepreneurial (Small Business) Approach: Small, separate enterprise producing goods or services that most often employees persons with and without disabilities.

Mobile Work Crew: Contracted services provided in the community by a small group of disabled persons who travel to various sites with a supervisor. Opportunities for interaction with non-disabled persons are planned and occur on a regular basis.

Job Coach Approach: Individuals with severe disabilities placed into integrated, competitive employment with training and supervision by a job coach and with ongoing support from a job coach or other specialist.

Job Partner: An employee at the job site who advocates for the client, orients the client, and offers social contact to the client. The Job Partner may or may not be subsidized for his/her work with the client.

The definitions of the supported employment approaches provided here all refer to supported employment in integrated settings at competitive wages.

I. Organization Characteristics

Q-1 When did your supported employment program begin operation?

_____ MONTH/YEAR

Q-2 How many current total staff members (including supported employment staff) does your organization have?

____ TOTAL FULL-TIME STAFF

Q-3 How many managers, job trainers and follow-along specialists are on your supported employment program staff?

____ MANAGERS
____ JOB TRAINERS
____ FOLLOW-ALONG SPECIALISTS
____ OTHER (Specify:_____)

Q-4 Approximately how many consumers came into your supported employment program during program year 1988-1989 from each of the following settings?

____ TRANSITION/TRAINING EMPLOYMENT
____ ANOTHER SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM
____ COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT
____ NONWORK (DAY PROGRAM)
____ UNEMPLOYED
____ SCHOOL
____ LONG-TERM SHELTERED PROGRAM
____ VOC REHAB REFERRAL
____ HOME
____ OTHER (Specify:_____)

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II. Referrals and Funding Sources

Q-5 When a participant in your organization's sheltered program moves into your supported employment program, what typically happens to the slot in the sheltered program? Circle the one best answer.

1 SLOT IS ROUTINELY FILLED WITHIN 6 MONTHS
2 SLOT IS ROUTINELY ELIMINATED
3 OTHER ACTION; PLEASE EXPLAIN _____
_____
4 WE DON'T HAVE A SHELTERED PROGRAM

Q-6 Please circle all funding sources your organization uses for supported employment; short-term (to the end of the initial training/funding phase), long-term (following initial training phase):

	SHORT-TERM	LONG-TERM
VR	1	2
MR	1	2
DD	1	2
MH	1	2
JTPA	1	2
FEDERAL GRANTS	1	2
FOUNDATION/GRANTS	1	2
OTHER FUNDRAISING	1	2
UNITED WAY	1	2
USER FEES	1	2
REVENUE GENERATED BY SALES OF PRODUCTS	1	2
OTHER (Specify:_____)	1	2

Q-7 What is the total amount of funding received for program year 1988-1989 from all of the above?

_____ TOTAL DOLLAR AMOUNT

Q-8 As a percent of your organization's total budget (all services and programs), what percent is the budget for your supported employment program?

_____% OF TOTAL ORGANIZATION BUDGET

Q-9 What constraints do sources put upon utilization of funds? Please circle all that apply.

1 FUNDING CONSTRAINTS ABOUT TIME FRAME(S)
2 FUNDING CONSTRAINTS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED
3 FUNDING CONSTRAINTS ABOUT ELIGIBLE OR TARGET POPULATIONS
4 OTHER (Specify:_____)

III. Consumer and Employer Characteristics

INSTRUCTIONS

For all following questions, use July 1, 1988 - September 30, 1989 as the time frame.

Q-10 How many consumers were served by your organization's sheltered workshop or adult activity center for 1988-1989?

_____ TOTAL NUMBER OF SHELTERED WORKSHOP/ACTIVITY CENTER CONSUMERS

Q-11 How many consumers were served by your organization's supported employment program for 1988-1989?

_____ TOTAL NUMBER OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT CONSUMERS

Q-12 For all consumers in your supported employment program during 1988-1989, how many were male and female?

_____ MALE _____ FEMALE

Q-13 How many of your supported employees fall into the following age categories?

_____ UNDER 18
_____ 18-21
_____ 22-30
_____ 31-40
_____ 41-64
_____ 65 AND OVER

Q-14 For all consumers in your supported employment program in 1988-1989, how many had the following diagnosis as a primary disability?

_____ MILD MENTAL RETARDATION (IQ 55-70)
_____ MODERATE MENTAL RETARDATION (IQ 40-54)
_____ SEVERE MENTAL RETARDATION (IQ 25-39)
_____ PROFOUND MENTAL RETARDATION (IQ 24)
_____ TRAUMATICALLY BRAIN-INJURED
_____ CHRONICALLY MENTALLY ILL
_____ HEARING IMPAIRED
_____ VISUALLY IMPAIRED
_____ SPINAL CORD INJURY
_____ LEARNING DISABILITY
_____ AUTISM
_____ EPILEPSY
_____ CEREBRAL PALSY
_____ ALCOHOL/SUBSTANCE ABUSE
_____ OTHER (Specify:_____)

AND

_____ OF THE ABOVE WERE MULTIPLY HANDICAPPED

Q-15 Prior to entering the supported employment program, what was the average hourly wage received by consumers (sheltered and regular job earnings)?

_____ AVERAGE HOURLY WAGE

Q-16 What was the status of these consumers immediately before entering into supported employment with regard to the following benefits?

_____ NUMBER THAT RECEIVED MEDICAL ENTITLEMENTS (MEDICAID/MEDICARE)
_____ NUMBER THAT RECEIVED PAYMENTS (SSI, SSDI, ETC.)

Q-17 How many supported employees regularly and routinely used each of the following as their primary transportation to and from work?

_____ INDEPENDENT USE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
_____ WALKS/RIDES BIKE OR MOPED
_____ DEPENDENT USE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (NEED BUS TRAINING)
_____ ARRANGED CAR POOL
_____ PARENT/FRIEND DRIVES
_____ HANDICAPPED TRANSPORTATION
_____ TRANSPORTED BY YOUR ORGANIZATION
_____ TAXI
_____ OTHER (Specify:_____)

Q-18 How many supported employees resided in each of the following <u>at the time</u> they entered the supported employment program?

_____ LIVE INDEPENDENTLY
_____ LIVE WITH RELATIVES OR GUARDIANS
_____ LIVE WITH 7 OR FEWER OTHER RESIDENTS; PARTTIME SUPERVISION
_____ LIVE WITH 7 OR FEWER OTHER RESIDENTS; FULLTIME SUPERVISION
_____ LIVE WITH MORE THAN 7 OTHER RESIDENTS; PARTTIME SUPERVISION
_____ LIVE WITH MORE THAN 7 OTHER RESIDENTS; FULLTIME SUPERVISION

Q-19 Based on your experience, how many supported employees moved into less structured, more independent living quarters after being employed?

_____ PROGRESSED TO A LESS SUPERVISED LIVING ARRANGEMENT

Q-20 What is the total number of consumers who have been placed into <u>paid</u> supported employment during 1988-1989?

_____ TOTAL NUMBER OF CONSUMERS IN PAID SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Q-21 In what type of positions are the consumers employed? Specify the number.

_____ JANITORIAL/MAINTENANCE
_____ FOOD SERVICE
_____ ASSEMBLY/LIGHT INDUSTRY
_____ CLERICAL
_____ CHILD CARE
_____ LAUNDRY WORKER
_____ HOUSEPERSON/STEWARD
_____ LAWN CARE
_____ STOCK PERSON
_____ OTHER (Specify:_____)

Q-22 Approximately what was the average hourly wage of all supported employees competitively placed for program year 1988-1989?

_____ AVERAGE HOURLY WAGE

Q-23 How many of your organization's supported employees received their wages from the following sources?

_____ THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM
_____ THE EMPLOYER
_____ OTHER (Specify:_____)

Q-24 How many supported employees received fringe benefits such as health coverage, sick leave, vacation, or other fringe benefits?

_____ RECEIVING FRINGE BENEFITS

Q-25 How many of your organization's supported employees, in program year 1988-1989, worked the following <u>average</u> number of hours per week?

_____ LESS THAN 20 HOURS PER WEEK
_____ 20-24 HOURS PER WEEK
_____ 25-34 HOURS PER WEEK
_____ 35 OR MORE HOURS PER WEEK

Q-26 For those with supported employment outcomes, what is the average amount of time they have been <u>employed</u> since enrollment?

1 60 DAYS
2 3 - 6 MONTHS
3 7 - 12 MONTHS
4 MORE THAN 12 MONTHS

Q-27 How many supported employees have had more than one job placement during 1988-1989?

____ NUMBER HAVING MORE THAN ONE JOB PLACEMENT

Q-28 How many supported employees achieved the following levels of integration on the job in 1988-1989?

____ WORKED ALONG WITH NON-HANDICAPPED WORKERS AND HAD OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTEGRATION AT BREAKS AND LUNCH
____ NO INTEGRATION DURING WORK, BUT HAD OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTEGRATION AT BREAKS AND LUNCH
____ NO INTEGRATION DURING WORK, AND HAD NO OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTEGRATION AT BREAKS AND LUNCH

Q-29 How many of your organization's supported employees left their job during 1988-1989 for each of the following primary reasons?

____ PROMOTED OR QUIT FOR A BETTER JOB
____ QUIT FOR MEDICAL REASONS
____ QUIT DUE TO LOSS OF TRANSPORTATION
____ QUIT DUE TO RELOCATION OF RESIDENCE
____ LAID OFF FOR LACK OF WORK
____ LOST JOB WHEN BUSINESS CLOSED
____ PRODUCTION TOO LOW/PERFORMANCE INADEQUATE
____ POOR SOCIAL SKILLS/ADAPTATION
____ UNSATISFACTORY ATTENDANCE DUE TO TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS
____ FELT SOCIALLY ISOLATED ON THE JOB
____ ALL OTHER CAUSES (Specify:_____
_____)

Q-30 With how many different employers does your organization currently have supported employees working?

____ NUMBER OF EMPLOYERS PROVIDE WORK FOR ONE OR MORE SUPPORTED EMPLOYEES

Q-31 In what types of companies were the supported employees placed? Circle all that apply.

1 FOOD
2 JANITORIAL
3 INDUSTRIAL (FACTORY, ETC.)
4 SERVICE PROVIDER (CHURCH/AGENCY)
5 COMMERCIAL (BUSINESS/STORE)
6 CONSTRUCTION
7 EDUCATION
8 HEALTH CARE
9 LODGING
10 OTHER (Specify:_____)

Q-32 How many of these employers received in 1988-1989, Targeted Jobs Tax Credit or a similar financial incentive to employ workers with handicaps?

____ NUMBER OF EMPLOYERS RECEIVING TJTC

Q-33 How many supported employees have utilized the following employment approaches?

____ JOB COACHING
____ JOB PARTNER
____ ENCLAVE
____ MOBILE WORK CREW
____ ENTREPRENEURIAL
____ OTHER (Specify:_____)

Q-34 Which supported employment approach currently being conducted by your organization do you consider to be the most cost effective? Circle the one you consider to be the most cost effective.

1 JOB COACHING
2 JOB PARTNER
3 ENCLAVE
4 MOBILE WORK CREW
5 ENTREPRENEURIAL MODEL
6 OTHER (Specify:_____)

Q-35 What is the average amount of staff intervention hours per supported employment case?

____ AVERAGE STAFF INTERVENTION HOURS PER CASE

Q-36 How many consumers have completed DRS Title VI-C time-limited training and have moved into DMR or DMH follow-along status?

____ DRS TITLE VI-C TIME-LIMITED TRAINING
____ DMR FOLLOW-ALONG
____ DMH FOLLOW-ALONG

Q-37 On the average, how long did it take the consumers to complete the DRS Title VI-C time-limited training?

____ AVERAGE TIME IN DRS TITLE VI-C TRAINING

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Q-38 Please project the type of support services the employees will need while in the Follow-Along status? (circle all that apply)

____ TRANSPORTATION
____ JOB COUNSELING
____ MONEY MANAGEMENT
____ ADDITIONAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING
____ SOCIAL SECURITY HELP
____ JOB CHANGE
____ COUNSELING
____ FAMILY LIFE
____ MEDICAL FOLLOW-UP
____ RECREATION
____ HOUSING DEVELOPMENT
____ LIVING SKILLS TRAINING
____ HOUSE MONITORING
____ HOUSING LOCATION
____ OTHER (Specify:_____)

IV. Summary Evaluation of Supported Employment

Q-39 Which factors make supported employment preferable to sheltered employment for persons with disabilities? (Circle the factors you consider to be most important.)

1 INTEGRATION
2 NORMAL LIFE AND WORK EXPERIENCE
3 SELF-ESTEEM
4 WAGES
5 IMPACT ON FAMILY AND COMMUNITY
6 BETTER STAFF:CONSUMER RATIO
7 MORE INDIVIDUALIZED PROGRAMMING
8 OTHER (Specify:_____)

Q-40 What are some of the problems you have encountered that impede the development and continuation of supported employment services? Please rate the severity of each item, based on your experience. (circle number)

Impediment	Severity (LOW 1 2 3 4 5 HIGH)
LACK OF AVAILABLE JOBS	1 2 3 4 5
EMPLOYER ATTITUDES (NEGATIVE, DISINTERESTED, UNMOTIVATED)	1 2 3 4 5
THREAT OF OPERATING REVENUE LOSS FROM REDUCTION OF OTHER ACTIVITIES	1 2 3 4 5
INADEQUATE FUNDS IN GENERAL	1 2 3 4 5
UNCERTAINTY OF NEW FUNDING/ INSTABILITY OF CURRENT FUNDING	1 2 3 4 5
ABILITY TO SERVE CONSUMERS WITH SEVERE DISABILITIES	1 2 3 4 5
CONSUMER TRANSPORTATION DIFFICULTIES	1 2 3 4 5
LACK OF EXPERIENCED DIRECT SUPPORT STAFF	1 2 3 4 5
LOSS OF SSI/SSDI BENEFITS TO CONSUMER	1 2 3 4 5
RESISTANCE FROM AGENCY BOARD OF DIRECTORS/TRUSTEES	1 2 3 4 5
RESISTANCE TO CHANGE BY CONSUMER'S FAMILY/CAREGIVER	1 2 3 4 5
LACK OF SUPPORT FROM ADMINISTRATION	1 2 3 4 5

Q-41 What changes, if any, would you like to see, either within your program or in the support your program receives from outside sources that could help you do a more effective job of providing supported employment? Which of these categories would most improve your ability to do so? (circle all that apply)

1 MORE MONEY
2 DMH/MR, DRS
STATE/COUNTY COOPERATION
3 SERVE MORE CONSUMERS WITH SEVERE
DISABILITIES
4 FLEXIBILITY IN FUNDING GUIDELINES
5 MORE STAFF TRAINING
6 TRY NEW APPROACHES TO SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT
7 PROVISION OF ON-SITE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Q-42 What <u>other</u> changes would you like to see? Please describe.

PLEASE RETURN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE RETURN ENVELOPE
ALONG WITH THE BEST PRACTICES IN SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND EFFORT!!

SECTION II: BEST PRACTICE ELEMENTS IN SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

The Importance and Implementation of Best Practice Elements as Perceived by Supported Employment Professionals

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The Importance and Implementation of Best Practice Elements as Perceived by Supported Employment Professionals

Historically unemployment rates for those with disabilities have been in the range of 50% to 75% (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1983). As pointed out by Wehman and his colleagues (Wehman, Hill, Hill, Brooke, Pendleton, & Britt, 1985), this fact was central to the federal government's emphasis upon competitive employment for persons with severe disabilities. Since the early 1980s supported employment, as a vehicle to achieving competitive employment, has been a federal priority (Elder, 1984; Will, 1984). Various demonstration projects (e.g., Brickey, Browning, & Campbell, 1982; Williams & Vogelsburg, 1983) and follow-up studies (e.g., Hill, Wehman, Kregel, Banks, & Metzler, 1987; Wehman, et al., 1985) have illustrated that supported employment has been an effective employment strategy for those with severe disabilities.

Supported employment, as defined by experts in the field, is characterized by four criteria which are employment, integration, on-going support, and severe disability (Schalock, 1988). Many have contributed to the identification of quality indicators for supported employment (e.g., Mank, Rhodes, & Bellamy, 1986; Bellamy, Rhodes, Mank, & Albin, 1988), and work has been done on the evaluation of employment services for persons with developmental disabilities (Schalock & Hill, 1986). Researchers have also focused on demographic and outcome analysis of consumers participating in supported employment (e.g., Wehman, Hill, Hill, Bank, Pendleton, & Britt, 1985; NARF, 1989; Petty, Henderson, & Dukes, 1989; Wehman, 1990; Wehman, et al., 1985).

Although major criteria for supported employment programs have been identified, evaluation procedures proposed, and consumers scrutinized, few have attempted to identify a connection between what the literature has established as being quality indicators of services and what practices have been incorporated into supported employment programs. According to Rockart (cited in Schalock & Hill, 1986), performance indicators or best practice elements need to be identified because essential to program evaluation is the specification of ". . . objective, measurable, and relevant performance indicators" (p.290). This measurement role for quality indicators is accepted by experts, but the degree to which service providers support the importance of such indicators is unknown. The major focus of this research is to identify how important quality indicators are to those who are involved in supported employment services.

According to Stark, Schalock, and Berland (1986), future research in the area of employment services for persons with developmental disabilities will focus upon applied policy issues. These issues will be realized by an emphasis on accountability including measurability and reportability. Service providers and policymakers will be required to demonstrate economic and quality-of-work life improvements for those with developmental disabilities. In addition, they will be accountable for demonstrating the effectiveness of various employment strategies (Stark et al., 1986). Given this increased interest in accountability and demonstrable effectiveness, it is necessary to investigate the degree to which those involved with supported employment perceive various program activities as being important to the provision of quality services.

In the state of Tennessee, supported employment services are provided by a number of agencies and organizations. Many of these programs began operation prior to the 1987 federal regulations on supported employment and the 1988 Division of Rehabilitation Services procedural guidelines governing Tennessee Title VI-C programs. The personnel within these programs have varying amounts of training and expertise; they also differ in their opinions regarding what constitutes exemplary practices in the field. To illustrate Tennessee service providers' opinions of supported employment quality indicators is the aim of this research. The ultimate purpose for this activity is to evaluate what Tennessee providers are currently doing so that policymakers may more appropriately target future funds and planning efforts. Focused evaluation and planning lend to increased program accountability and effectiveness.

In order to accomplish the stated purposes of this study, several specific questions were developed:

1. What are the best practice elements of supported employment as identified in the literature and by experts in the field?
2. Do Tennessee professionals in supported employment agree that the identified best practice elements are important to the delivery of quality services?
3. Do Tennessee professionals in supported employment perceive the identified best practice elements to be well implemented by programs in the state?
4. Is the perceived level of implementation of the best practice elements lower than the professionals' evaluations of importance?

5. Do the various supported employment professional groups differ in their evaluations of the best practice elements in terms of importance to quality service delivery and perceived degree of implementation?

To answer these questions, an extensive literature review was conducted and survey data were collected from Tennessee professionals who have participated in the supported employment initiative at a variety of levels. The remainder of this report presents the literature reviewed and discusses the data analyses and conclusions.

Literature Review

Before instrument development and data collection could begin in order to identify the extent to which Tennesseans agree with the importance of best practice elements, these elements had to be identified. Two processes were utilized to accomplish this goal. First, a comprehensive review of supported employment literature was conducted by the researchers. Second, select experts in supported employment were identified and asked to validate the relevance of the elements identified by the researchers. This section of the report summarizes the literature sources that were used to identify the best practice elements.

The supported employment literature was collected by conducting library searches and obtaining materials at seminars, conferences, and through publication advertisements. The literature collected addressed two issues—methods for evaluating supported employment programs and the identification of quality indicators in supported employment. Some materials spoke to both of these issues while some addressed primarily one or the other.

Supported Employment Evaluation Methods

Both Schalock and Bellamy have written extensively on various methods that are appropriate for the evaluation of supported employment services. Critical performance evaluation indicators (Schalock, 1988) and indicators of quality (Bellamy, Rhodes, Mank, & Alpin, 1988) are the phrases used by these authors to address the identification of program elements that are important to quality services. Although both Schalock and Bellamy agree that it is very important to identify such elements to achieve accountability, they differ in their treatment of the intended role for such elements.

Schalock (1988) emphasizes the evolutionary phases of programs. The current phase of any program should influence the critical performance evaluation indicators that are chosen because accountability issues vary across the different evolutionary phases. The three phases as described by Schalock are Phase I, the Resources phase; Phase II, the Systematic phase; and Phase III, the Accountability and Systems Interface phase. For example, Schalock maintains that the issue pertinent to Phase II, Systematic, is the development of a system that facilitates service delivery, measurability, and reportability. The relevant accountability issues include how well the system has been implemented and whether or not policies and procedures have been followed by staff. Schalock identifies systems review as being the appropriate methodology for this monitoring and evaluation; therefore, the critical performance evaluation indicators chosen for the review should reflect the effectiveness of policies and procedures. When a program has progressed to Phase III, Accountability and Systems Interface, critical performance evaluation criteria dealing with the connection of the

program to the community and client-referenced outcomes are appropriate for the accountability measures.

Bellamy, too, stresses the importance of measurable indicators but broadens the focus into a total quality assurance approach of which evaluation is only one component. According to Bellamy and his colleagues (Bellamy, Rhodes, Mank, & Alpin, 1988), the consideration of quality in supported employment is relevant to decision-making at the levels of development, funds, administration, operations improvement, and participant involvement. Quality indicators are generated by consideration of five different tasks to be accomplished by supported employment programs. These tasks are the creation of work opportunities, the performance of work to specifications, the integration of workers, the provision of support, and the maintenance of an effective organization. A quality indicator measure that is appropriate for evaluating the creation of work opportunities would be the counting of critical job development activities that occurred within the program. This measure could be useful at all of the decision levels. For example, at the participant involvement level a potential consumer might inquire as to the number of different job development activities that are available in any one program.

Although Bellamy presents quality indicators as being relevant to all levels of decision-making, he, as does Schalock, emphasizes the role of indicators in evaluation at the operations improvement level. Administrative decisions concerning the improvement of services should not be based upon guesses; instead, the degree to which various program elements lend to quality services should guide administrative decisions (Bellamy et al., 1988). Bellamy supports the use of an information system that is geared to monitoring

program outcomes. Such a system would be composed of quality indicator measures that have been developed by a five-step process. These steps are "1) identifying the potential users of the information and the decisions they need to make, 2) defining the important or valued features of a program's outcomes, 3) developing a measurement tool and method, 4) establishing a process for data aggregation, and 5) distributing summary reports to all affected groups" (Bellamy et al., 1988, p. 125).

As stated previously, both Bellamy and Schalock acknowledge the importance of quality indicators for the provision of supported employment services. In addition, both authors do not solely focus upon the identification of such indicators but seek to connect quality indicators to various program and decision-making issues. Schalock's emphasis upon programmatic development specifies the accountability issues that should generate indicators relevant to the evolutionary phase of a program. Bellamy addresses quality indicators as being important to all levels of decision-making, not just a programmatic level. Collectively, the works of Schalock and Bellamy stress the importance of developing elements indicative of quality supported employment services within relevant context. Many programmatic and decision-making factors must be considered when developing quality indicators appropriate for accountability.

Quality Indicators of Supported Employment

Schalock's and Bellamy's work on evaluation procedures addresses the need for the identification of quality indicators or elements of best practices in supported employment. In conjunction with the interests of these authors, there is a growing national interest in the issues of quality or best practices in supported employment. The expansion of supported

employment programs will require specific strategies for comparing services, monitoring performance, and generally improving quality (Rhodes, 1985). The remainder of this review covers literature with specific examples of quality indicators.

Guidelines and assessment tools have been suggested by various groups to aide states and programs in the development and implementation of supported employment services. Rhodes (1985) views the process of defining quality parameters within supported employment as a two level approach. He describes the first level of quality parameters as core features or minimum standards offered in the federal supported employment guidelines; and the second level is related to quality features, which is more complex. He suggests that there is ". . . a continuum of performance that is possible within every supported employment option: once minimum standards are met, what are the features constituting improved performance?" (p.3).

Rhodes proposes that the minimum standards of supported employment include the following characteristics: (a) regular opportunity to work at least half-time work, or 20 hours per week; (b) persons must be compensated at least at their level of productivity and based upon commensurate wage (Department of Labor guidelines, 1978); (c) an individual's employment should be considered to be integrated when he or she works where persons without disabilities who are not paid caregivers are present in the work setting or in the immediate vicinity; (d) supported employment exists when the persons served require on-going support and is inappropriate for persons who would be better served in time-limited preparation programs; and (e) for a job or program option to constitute supported

employment, it must include the provision of on-going, frequent support without which the employment would not be maintained.

Rhodes argues that quality within supported employment must not be viewed narrowly as a minimum set of standards to be met. "If we are to recognize the divergent constraints, interests, and needs of individual communities, it is instructive to view employment opportunities as having features including consumer outcomes, which range from unacceptable to exemplary" (p. 9). He suggests that several critical outcome-related performance indicators are implicit in the definition of supported employment. These indicators include an index of employment success (i.e., wages and work benefits); direct consumer related outcomes of employment, such as measures of social and physical integration; a set of economic indices which provide (a) a net gain to consumers, as well as wages paid; (b) a representation of how many public dollars are required from each service option to generate the consumer outcomes; (c) a determination if the service is economically viable for providers, to assure stability of the employment support; and (d) the employment impact upon government programs, such as reductions in transfer payments.

Nisbet and Callahan (1986) have developed an assessment tool based upon 18 quality indicators that pertained to administrative or programmatic issues. These indicators were developed during the implementation of a model demonstration effort and were based upon field research, literature reviews, input from practitioners, and a national validation study. The developers suggested that the indicators could be used as a checklist of vital program components and viewed as a profile of the supported employment services offered. No

absolute values are attached to the quality indicators. Each item may be rated as outstanding, acceptable, needs refinement, or unacceptable.

Quality indicators in supported employment were also identified by Allen, Biggs, Sanford, Scavarda, and Scott (1987) and incorporated into a meaningful and practical evaluation system. The evaluation tool contained eight major quality indicators: consumer characteristics, employment measures, quality of placement, nature and amount of support, nature and degree of integration, quality of life, systems change, and program costs.

Berkeley Planning Associates (BPA) (1986) developed supported employment performance measures for the U.S. Department of Education/Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services. The intent of this study was ". . . to help clarify supported employment program objectives and identify performance measures that can be used at a variety of different levels—federal, state, and local—to document the practices and achievements of supported employment programs . . ." (p. 2). BPA identified six broad areas of program performance: meaningful work, compensation, on-going support, worksite integration and community participation, quality of life, and community change. The performance domains were expanded into eight data collection and measurement topics: employment outcomes, quality of employment, worksite integration, on-going support, quality of life, participant characteristics, systems change, and program costs. It was the hope of BPA that ". . . the collection of a core set of client-level data on an on-going basis will come to be viewed as a part of the normal cost of 'doing business' as a supported employment service provider" (p. 4).

On a different note, industry has become involved by defining quality indicators thought vital to the delivery of supported employment services. For example, Integrated Resources developed a Quality Indicators Checklist (1988) for Pizza Hut. Integrated Resources intended for the instrument to be used as a self-evaluation for providers interested in working with Pizza Hut and by Integrated Resources and Pizza Hut to assist in developing entry-level and on-going performance criteria for supported employment providers. The checklist contained six major quality indicator domains: business image, service skills and experience, planning and advocacy, staffing, labor/wage, and employer relations. These domains were expanded into 35 performance measures grouped by domain topic.

Trach, Rusch, and DeStefano (1987) describe five components that constitute the model of supported employment upon which their Degree of Implementation Manual (DOI) is based: Community Survey and Job Analysis, Job Match, Job Placement, Job Maintenance, and Related Job Services/Interagency Coordination. The DOI is an evaluation instrument that identifies the above components which are necessary for establishing and maintaining a supported employment program. The data obtained from this instrument allow program developers and evaluators to compare a specific supported employment program to national standards. The DOI is designed to provide direction for data-based staff development and identify areas within the program that are in need of further refinement.

As can be seen by the literature reviewed, the assurance of quality in supported employment programs is not an ignored topic; indeed, quality indicators or best practice elements are addressed by many strong researchers. Rhodes (1985) addresses outcome-performance indicators while Nisbet and Callahan (1986) focus upon administrative or

programmatic issues. Still others, such as Allen et al. (1987), Trach et al. (1987), and the Berkeley Planning Associates (1986), deal with quality indicators at all levels of programming. Industry is also involved in this effort as demonstrated by the work of Integrated Resources (1988).

Although supported employment is a relatively new service option for persons with disabilities, researchers and experts have been quick to address accountability and quality. The identification of quality indicators or best practice elements is essential to the growth and availability of effective service. From Schalock's recognition of the growth process of all programs to Trach's Degree of Implementation Manual, which evaluates the degree to which various program components have been instituted, it is obvious that the value of supported employment programs will continue to be assessed by researchers and consumers alike. The next step is to determine if supported employment program providers and consumers view best practice elements as truly being indicative of quality and whether or not these elements are being instituted by various programs. The designation of best practice elements in the literature is a start; however, such elements are meaningless if they are not perceived as essential to quality practice by service providers and consumers.

Method

Respondents

The respondents of this study included 191 professionals who were actively involved in the Tennessee supported employment initiative during the fall of 1989. The respondent groups consisted of selected state policymakers (N = 42), program personnel operating supported employment programs (N = 108), caseworkers (N = 18), and secondary teachers

of Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) classes (N = 23). Because the populations were small, the researchers chose to include all identified respondents. The makeup of each group was verified by the Tennessee Initiative on Employment (TIE) Management Team, a state interagency team whose purpose is to promote integrated employment opportunities for persons with developmental disabilities.

The policymaker group consisted of select TIE Team members, which included assistant commissioners of the Divisions of Mental Retardation (DMR), Mental Health (DMH), and Rehabilitation (DRS). DRS regional supervisors and DMR community regional office assistant superintendents and directors were also included in this group.

Program personnel respondents included agency executive directors and personnel designated as supported employment coordinators. These respondents were divided into two subgroups: program personnel from agencies providing supported employment for one year or more and personnel from agencies that were in a start-up phase (six months or less) at the time of the study. Included in the caseworker group were rehabilitation counselors who were specifically assigned to manage supported employment consumer cases, DMR community services caseworkers, and DMR quality assurance monitors. The teacher group consisted of the Department of Education secondary teachers of LRE classes. A major component of the LRE curriculum is to assist students who have severe disabilities make the transition from school to work or to supported employment programs conducted by adult service agencies. Many of these teachers are in contact with the supported employment programs prior to the student's exit date.

Instrumentation

Several steps were taken to develop an instrument that was designed to determine the opinions of Tennessee professionals about the importance of best practice elements. A comprehensive literature search, a Delphi technique, and instrument pretesting were conducted to construct and validate the instrument. The literature search, as previously discussed, resulted in a tentative list of 85 best practice elements that various professionals (e.g., Allen, Biggs, Sanford, Scavarda, & Scott, 1987; Berkeley Planning Associates, 1986; Nisbet & Callahan, 1986, etc.) suggested should be present in supported employment programs to ensure quality services.

A Delphi technique was used to obtain content agreement about the identified elements. Seven reviewers, each recognized for their expert knowledge of supported employment, were selected to participate based upon their professional work and interest in the research topic and their representation as researchers, educators, or administrators (see Appendix A: Panel of Reviewers).

The reviewers were asked to (a) indicate how they perceived the importance of each element as rated on a 5-point scale, (b) change the wording of and/or delete the original elements, (c) add new elements, and (d) edit the elements. A predetermined minimum criterion of acceptance was established as 3.0 on a 5-point scale.

All elements met the minimum criterion after the first round of review. The reviewers suggested rewording 26 elements and adding four. Three elements were redundant and were deleted by the researchers.

Instrument construction. The 82 elements, validated by the panel of reviewers, made up the content of the Best Practices in Supported Employment Survey (BPSE) instrument (See Appendix B: BPSE). The BPSE was organized into two content categories: administration and programmatic issues. The elements within these categories were organized into subcategories. The administration category contained six subcategories: planning, fiscal management, personnel, collaboration-school programs, collaboration-community resources, and program evaluation. The programmatic issues element category contained seven subcategories related to quality of work, paid work, assessment and job development, job analyses, on-site instruction, on-going support, and quality of life. A 3-point rating scale was used to ascertain the respondents' opinions about the importance of each element. Levels of interpretation were assigned to the scale with the numeral 3 defined as "high importance" and 1 as "low importance."

A separate instrument was designed to determine the degree to which selected respondent groups perceived the implementation of the elements in supported employment programs as well as their perceptions of the importance of the elements. This instrument was completed by program personnel of existing sites, caseworkers, and LRE teachers. The elements and the importance rating scale remained the same; a second 3-point rating scale was added to assess perceived implementation. The degrees of implementation were defined as "3 = fully implemented" to "1 = not implemented."

The last part of both instruments contained nine questions related to the respondent's background. The respondents were requested to indicate a response by circling or writing in their choice. The question topics included highest degree completed, major field of the

highest degree, job title, years employed in an education or habilitation/rehabilitation related job, length of time involved in the supported employment initiative, type of supported employment training received, perceived level of expertise in supported employment, interest in receiving technical training, and preferred type of training format.

Pretesting. To identify construction defects, the instrument was pretested by 16 respondents prior to mailing. Individuals were selected from each of the respondent groups. A 100% response was acquired after a telephone follow-up. All agreed that the directions for completing the survey were clear, and the wording of the elements was straightforward. Many favorable comments about the need for the study were received and all requested a copy of the results.

Procedure

In October 1989, each respondent was mailed a BPSE along with a cover letter describing the purpose of the survey. Supportive letters from state assistant commissioners of the Divisions of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Rehabilitation Services were included in the summary packet. Respondents were instructed to complete the instrument and return it in a timely fashion.

Two weeks after the BPSE had been mailed, a postcard was sent to all respondents as a form of thank you to those who had responded and a courteous reminder for those who had not responded. Three weeks following the postcard reminder, a replacement survey was sent to nonrespondents along with a cover letter indicating the importance of their response and an appeal from them to return the completed instrument. Follow-up telephone calls were made in November to nonrespondents.

Data Analysis

Reliability analyses. Cronbach's alpha was computed for both the importance and the implementation scales in order to assess the surveys for internal consistency. The analysis was run for each of the 13 different element subcategories.

Importance and implementation criteria. In order to establish whether or not any of the elements were accepted by the respondents as being indicative of best practices for quality supported employment services, it was necessary to set a criterion by which to judge each subcategory of elements as well as each element. It was decided that any subcategory of elements and any element having a mean importance rating of 2.50 or above illustrated acceptance by the respondents. The researchers also looked at the data set by analyzing the percentages of those responding 3 or "high importance." Those elements with 75% or more of the respondents having chosen 3 were considered accepted as important to the delivery of quality supported employment services.

The same 2.50 mean criterion was used to evaluate the implementation responses. As for looking at the percentages of respondents choosing 3 or "fully implemented", a criterion of 70% was utilized by the researchers.

Importance and implementation comparison. In order to determine whether or not the implementation ratings were indeed lower than the importance ratings, t tests were calculated to compare the implementation means with the importance means. T tests were calculated on all of the elements but only for those respondents who completed both scales.

Respondent group comparisons. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) procedure was used to determine if there were any differences among the various respondent

groups in their responses to both the importance and the implementation scales. An analysis was conducted on each of the 13 element subcategories. The elements within each subcategory served as the dependent variables while the respondent groups were the independent variables.

Results

Return Rate

Of the 199 surveys mailed, 155 were returned for a 78% response rate. Of those returned, some were either not completed or were characterized by a large amount of missing data; therefore, 147 of 155 were included in the analyses yielding a 95% useable data rate. The following percentages reflect the amount of useable data collected per respondent group: policymakers - 95%; program personnel - 95%; caseworkers - 87%; and LRE teachers - 89%.

Instrument Reliability

The reliability of the respondents' ratings was analyzed using Cronbach's coefficient alpha, a measure of the internal consistency of a scale. Seven of the element subcategories (i.e., Planning - .74, Collaboration-School Programs - .91, Collaboration-Community Programs - .73, Program Evaluation - .71, Job Analyses - .78, On-Site Instruction - .83, and Quality of Life - .84) had moderate to high alpha's on the importance scale; each of these element subcategories appear to have measured consistently the particular attribute of each subcategory. The remainder of the element subcategories (i.e., Fiscal Management - .55, Personnel - .56, Quality of Work - .60, Paid Work - .66, Assessment and Job Development

- .69, and On-Going Support - .69) had slightly lower alpha's on the importance scale which suggests less internal consistency for these subcategories. It may be that these element subcategories measured a number of other unidentified constructs resulting in the lower alphas.

Overall, the alphas calculated for the element subcategories of the implementation scale were moderately high (i.e., Planning - .83; Fiscal Management - .76, Personnel - .85, Collaboration-School Programs - .86, Collaboration-Community Programs - .84, Program Evaluation - .78, Quality of Work - .87, Paid Work - . 77, Assessment and Job Development - . 89, Job Analyses - .82, On-Site Instruction - .92, On-Going Support - .88, Quality of Life - .84). This suggests that the assessment of the implementation of the elements may be a more consistent measure of the elements than the importance evaluation of the elements.

Respondent Characteristics

The BPSE included questions concerning the educational and supported employment backgrounds of the respondents. The master's was the highest degree earned by slightly more than half of the respondents (53.1%). More of the policymakers (69.4%) held master's degrees than did the program personnel of existing sites (44.6%), program personnel of new sites (50%), caseworkers (61.5%), and LRE teachers (48.3%). For 69 of the respondents (52.7%), the major field of study for the highest degree earned was education or rehabilitation. A majority of the LRE teachers (87.5%) had their highest degrees in education while 55.6% of the caseworkers had their highest degrees in an education or

rehabilitation area, as did 42.4% of program personnel at existing sites. Half of the program personnel at new sites held their highest degrees in a social science (e.g., psychology).

As a whole, the respondents represent an experienced group. More than 20% of the respondents reported that they had been employed in an education/rehabilitation-related job for 16 to 20 years, and 23.7% reported 6 to 10 years of experience. Only 18.2% of the respondents reported between 0 to 5 years of experience in an education or rehabilitation related job.

Concerning experience with supported employment services, 80% of the respondents indicated that they were involved in the supported employment initiative through providing services, case management, developing/overseeing procedural guidelines, or other related activities. Of the program personnel at existing sites, 91% reported being involved in the initiative along with 71.4% of the policymakers, 76.2% of the program personnel at new sites, and 77% of the caseworkers. The LRE teachers, understandably, were characterized by the fewest being involved with only 66.7% of them responding that they were directly involved in the initiative. As for how long the respondents had been involved in supported employment, 75.3% reported that they had been involved with the initiative from 0 to 2 years. Less than half of those involved for 0 to 2 years (38.8%) reported having been involved for 6 months or less. Only 24.3% of the respondents reported having been involved in supported employment for 2.5 to 5 years. These data indicate that although the respondents are very experienced in the areas of education or rehabilitation, they started in supported employment along with implementation of the initiative which occurred within the last five years.

In that the respondents have not had a large number of years to be involved in supported employment, it is interesting to note that 54% rated their perceived level of expertise to be "in training." Only 22% perceived themselves as being almost expert, and 20% felt they were either not very knowledgeable or were at a novice level of expertise. The respondents reported that the training they had received was primarily achieved via workshops/conferences (61.8%) or on-the-job training (49.3%). Only 28.5% of the respondents chose professional journals as having been a resource for training.

Overall the respondents have not had the opportunity to gain a large number of years of experience in supported employment, and they perceive themselves to still be in training which has been primarily achieved via conferences/workshops. The majority (84.6%) of the respondents indicated that they were interested in obtaining technical training, and most of them chose workshops/conferences as the preferred format. Thirty percent selected willingness to have on-site technical assistance and 26.6% of the respondents chose special seminars. Very few of the respondents indicated an interest in college credit classes (12.6%) or tele-courses (7.7%).

What are the Best Practice Elements of Supported Employment?

This research question guided the previously discussed literature review. As for the determination of best practice elements, the Delphi results indicated that the elements identified via the literature were supported by leading experts in the field as being quality indicators of supported employment services. These elements were then included on the BPSE (Appendix B).

Do the Respondents Perceive that the Identified Best Practice Elements are Important to the Delivery of Quality Supported Employment Services?

The second major research question sought to determine the degree to which individuals involved in supported employment validated the experts' recommendations of best practice elements. As shown in Table 1, all 13 element subcategories met the pre-determined mean criterion of 2.50 on the importance scale. The subcategory of On-Going Support had the highest mean (2.84), and the Collaboration-School Programs subcategory had the lowest (2.53). As for the respondent groups, the means of the caseworkers and teachers were higher across the majority of the element subcategories than were the means of the policymakers and program personnel.

All elements were endorsed by the respondents as at least moderately important for quality service delivery. Only 10 elements failed to meet the pre-established mean criterion of 2.50 (Table 2, see Appendix C). Two of these elements were within the subcategory of Collaboration-School Programs; these were D24—School and supported personnel are involved in a task force which focuses on transition and supported employment, and D25—Supported personnel provide feedback to school districts on outcomes and status of graduates. Also, there were two elements within the subcategory of Quality of Life that did not meet the 2.50 criterion. These elements were G78—Consumers are assisted in obtaining after work social/recreational activities with nondisabled individuals, and G80—Consumers are assisted in obtaining and maintaining friendships. The six other elements that failed to meet the criteria represented six different subcategories which were Planning, Program Evaluation, Quality of Work, Paid Work, Job Analyses, and On-Site Instruction. The

Table 1

Importance Rating Means for Comparison of Policymakers, Program Personnel, Caseworkers, and Teachers on 2 Best Practice Element Categories and 13 Element Subcategories

Best Practice Categories and Subcategories	Policymakers (N=36)	Program Personnel Existing (N=59)	Program Personnel New (N=22)	Caseworkers (N=14)	Teachers (N=16)	All Respondents (N=147)
I. ADMINISTRATION						
A. Planning	2.70	2.61	2.63	2.71	2.75	2.68
B. Fiscal Management	2.72	2.74	2.83	2.81	2.77	2.77
C. Personnel	2.77	2.86	2.76	2.88	2.84	2.82
D. Collaboration-School Programs	2.57	2.48	2.25	2.50	2.85	2.53
E. Collaboration-Community Resources	2.72	2.73	2.71	2.75	2.90	2.76
F. Program Evaluation	2.63	2.58	2.49	2.63	2.70	2.61
II. PROGRAMMATIC ISSUES						
A. Quality of Work	2.65	2.77	2.73	2.70	2.74	2.72
B. Paid Work	2.61	2.71	2.62	2.79	2.76	2.70
C. Assessment of Job Development	2.70	2.70	2.70	2.84	2.83	2.75
D. Job Analyses	2.62	2.56	2.55	2.66	2.77	2.63
E. On-Site Instruction	2.70	2.72	2.64	2.75	2.78	2.72
F. On-Going Support	2.83	2.85	2.72	2.88	2.91	2.84
G. Quality of Life	2.60	2.65	2.61	2.67	2.86	2.68

subcategories of Collaboration-School, Program Evaluation, Job Analyses, and Quality of Life contained elements that had relatively lower means than the elements in the nine other subcategories.

Two element subcategories, Personnel and On-Going Support, had element means that were relatively higher than other subcategories. For example, in the Personnel subcategory three elements had means of 2.90 or above. Element C18—The agency and its staff present an image of professional competence with a service to sell rather than handicapism and charity—had a mean of 2.95 indicating respondent acceptance of it as being important to the provision of quality supported employment services. Four of the elements in the On-Going Support subcategory had means that were above 2.80. The mean for F71 was the highest in this subcategory suggesting acceptance of —Intensity and type of support varies according to individual needs—as important for quality service provision.

When looking at which response was chosen by the respondents, the pattern of results became even clearer. It was decided, by the researchers, that a criterion of 75% of respondents choosing HIGH IMPORTANCE would indicate acceptance as a best practice element. Using this criterion, 38 of the 82 elements were clearly supported by the respondents as being of HIGH IMPORTANCE (Table 2, see Appendix C). All but one (C19—Job trainer job descriptions include advocacy support of consumers while in supported employment programs) of the elements in the Personnel subcategory and all of the On-Going Support subcategory elements met the criterion. Although not meeting the set criterion, 13 of the 82 elements had between 70-74% (inclusive) of the respondents supporting them as being of HIGH IMPORTANCE.

Conversely, if less than 55% of the respondents rated an element HIGH IMPORTANCE, the element was considered not accepted as important for quality service delivery. Of the 82 elements, 7 failed to receive the support of 55% of the respondents (Table 2, see Appendix C). These 7 elements also fell below the 2.50 mean criterion and represented the following issues: (a) program advisory committee implementation, (b) outcome feedback to school districts, (c) annual external program review, (d) lower worker turnover for jobs developed, (e) preference for employer-initiated Department of Labor work certificates, (f) consumer assistance for obtaining recreational experiences with individuals without disabilities, and (g) consumer assistance in maintaining friendships.

In summary, whether considering the mean criterion of 2.50 or the 75% of respondents choosing High Importance criterion, it is clear that the majority of the elements were accepted by the respondents as being important to the delivery of quality supported employment services. Some elements were accepted more strongly than others, especially those on personnel and on-going support; while others displayed lower levels of acceptance such as those about school collaboration, systematic program evaluation, the quality of work, and the quality of life.

Do the Respondents Perceive That the Identified Best Practice Elements are Implemented in Tennessee Supported Employment Programs?

Program personnel of existing sites, caseworkers, and LRE teachers (N=89) were asked to rate on a 3-point scale the degree to which they thought each element had been implemented. Policymakers were not included in this analysis because of their indirect role in providing services. As shown in Table 3, these element subcategories received a mean

rating from all respondents of less than 2.50. The subcategory, On-Going Support, received the highest implementation mean rating (2.32) while the Collaboration-School Programs subcategory received the lowest overall mean rating (1.71). The teachers' mean implementation ratings of supported employment were lower than that of the other respondents.

Table 3

Implementation Rating Means for Comparison of Program Personnel, Caseworkers, and Teachers on 2 Best Practice Element Categories and 13 Element Subcategories

Best Practice Categories and Subcategories	Program Personnel Existing (N=59)	Caseworkers (N=14)	Teachers (N=16)	All Respondents (N=89)
I. ADMINISTRATION				
A. Planning	2.25	2.24	1.80	2.10
B. Fiscal Management	2.53	2.43	1.84	2.27
C. Personnel	2.56	2.22	2.15	2.31
D. Collaboration-School Programs	1.59	1.67	1.88	1.71
E. Collaboration-Community Resources	2.31	2.18	1.70	2.06
F. Program Evaluation	2.19	1.72	1.66	1.86
II. PROGRAMMATIC ISSUES				
A. Quality of Work	2.50	2.18	1.67	2.12
B. Paid Work	2.50	2.39	1.73	2.21
C. Assessment and Job Development	2.45	2.13	2.05	2.21
D. Job Analyses	2.33	2.01	1.80	2.05
E. On-Site Instruction	2.45	2.20	1.97	2.21
F. On-Going Support	2.58	2.38	1.99	2.32
G. Quality of Life	2.35	2.13	1.87	2.12

Only 12 elements had implementation mean ratings that were 2.50 or above (Table 4). Three elements in the Personnel subcategory met the criterion. For example, the element C16—Dress and grooming of program staff and consumers meet employer standards—had the highest mean of this subcategory. Three elements in the On-Site Instruction subcategory also met the criterion, and element E58—Instructional strategies are individualized—had the highest mean for this subcategory. The six remaining elements that met the criterion were in the subcategories of Fiscal Management, Quality of Work, Paid Work, On-Going Support, and Quality of Life. The highest rated element for implementation was G75—Consumers are treated respectfully in an age-appropriate manner—which was in the Quality of Life subcategory.

As with the importance scale, the researchers looked at the pattern of respondents who chose the FULLY IMPLEMENTED option. It was arbitrarily decided that an element would be accepted as fully implemented if 70% or more of the respondents rated it as such. Only four elements met this criterion as shown in Table 4. For example, B11—The host agency is fiscally solvent and stable—was in the Fiscal Management subcategory. In that few elements met the 70% criterion, the pattern of responses for the NOT IMPLEMENTED option was considered. For 11 of the elements, 25% or more of the respondents rated the element as not implemented in Tennessee supported employment programs (Table 5). For example, 58% of the respondents rated the element A8—An advisory committee has been formed with family/caregiver, consumer, and employer representation—as not implemented.

Table 4

12 Best Practice Elements Rated as Fully Implemented by Program Personnel, Caseworkers, and LRE Teachers

Best Practice Subcategories and Elements	N	* Mean Scores Fully Implemented	% Responding Fully Implemented
I. ADMINISTRATION			
B. Fiscal Management			
11. Host agency is fiscally solvent and stable.	88	2.71	78.4%**
C. Personnel			
15. Program staff have the knowledge and communication skills to interact with a variety of agency representatives, parents, employers, and consumers.	89	2.56	57.3%
16. Dress and grooming of program staff and consumers meet employer standards.	88	2.64	66.0%
18. Agency and staff present an image of professional competence with a service to sell rather than handicapism and charity.	88	2.60	64.0%
II. PROGRAMMATIC ISSUES			
A. Quality of Work			
35. General working conditions of the job settings are safe, integrated, and accessible.	89	2.58	64.0%
B. Paid Work			
40. Employer and program staff are in agreement about the consumer's job responsibilities.	89	2.62	67.4%

(Table 4 continues)

Best Practice Subcategories and Elements	N	* Mean Scores Fully Implemented	% Responding Fully Implemented
43. Commensurate and/or minimum wages are sought before considering sub-minimum wages.	88	2.67	74.0%**
E. On-Site Instruction			
58. Instructional strategies are individualized.	88	2.59	64.0%
59. Consumers receive direct training in actual situations and environments where skills (work, social, communication) are to be used.	87	2.51	59.3%
66. Job trainers utilize training strategies that meet the consumer's needs and ensure that the employer's standards are met (e.g., quality, safety, productivity requirements).	88	2.56	61.4%
F. Ongoing Support			
71. Intensity and type of support varies according to individual needs.	89	2.64	73.0%**
G. Quality of Life			
75. Consumers are treated respectfully in an age-appropriate manner.	88	2.82	83.0%**

* Mean criterion of 2.50 on 3-point implementation rating scale accepted as "Fully Implemented" (3 = Fully Implemented, 2 = Partially Implemented, 1 = Not Implemented).

** 70% of respondents rated elements as fully implemented.

Table 5

11 Best Practice Elements Rated as Not Implemented by Program Personnel, Caseworkers, and LRE Teachers

Best Practice Subcategories and Elements	N	* Mean Scores For All Groups Not Implemented	**% Responding Not Implemented
I. ADMINISTRATION			
A. Planning			
7. Agency demonstrates its commitment to supported employment by offering staff and parents/guardians in-service training and forums for discussion.	89	1.97	26.0%
8. Advisory committee has been formed with family/caregiver, consumer, and employer representation.	87	1.57	58.0%
D. Collaboration-School Programs			
21. Local school districts are encouraged to prepare students for supported employment through non-school, integrated vocational experiences.	85	1.90	31.0%
22. Strategies for sharing and transferring responsibility from school to adult supported employment services are clearly documented and used.	84	1.63	50.0%
23. Program personnel are directly involved with students before graduation from high school (IEP's, Transition Plans, direct training, consultation).	85	1.68	48.2%
24. School and supported personnel are involved in a task force which focuses on transition and supported employment.	83	1.63	52.0%
25. Supported personnel provide feedback to school districts on outcomes and status of graduates.	84	1.43	67.0%

(Table 5 continues)

Best Practice Subcategories and Elements	N	* Mean Scores For All Groups Not Implemented	**% Responding Not Implemented
F. Program Evaluation			
30. An annual external review is conducted by the participating community of professionals, consumers, and family/caregivers.	88	1.70	52.3%
II. PROGRAMMATIC ISSUES			
B. Paid Work			
44. Employer initiated Department of Labor work certificates are are the preferred option for consumer payment over an agency contracting with employers.	85	1.76	49.4%
G. Quality of Life			
78. Consumers are assisted in obtaining after work social/ recreational activities with nondisabled individuals.	88	1.84	38.0%
82. When appropriate, consumers are assisted in locating adult education opportunities and are coordinated with supported employment activities.	88	2.09	25.0%

* Mean criterion of 2.50 on a 3-point implementation rating scale accepted as "Fully Implemented" (3 = Fully Implemented, 2 = Partially Implemented, 1 = Not Implemented).

** 25% or more respondents rated elements as not implemented.

In summary, both the mean element ratings and the percentages of respondents who chose FULLY IMPLEMENTED illustrated that professionals did not perceive the best practice elements to be well implemented. The subcategories of Fiscal Management, Personnel, and On-Going Support received higher ratings of perceived implementation while Collaboration-School Programs and Program Evaluation received lower ratings of perceived implementation.

Are the Implementation Ratings of the Elements Significantly Lower Than the Ratings of Perceived Importance?

The next research question concerned whether or not the implementation ratings of the elements would be significantly lower than the importance ratings of the elements. T tests were conducted on the 82 element mean ratings for those respondents who completed both scales. The program personnel of existing sites, caseworkers, and LRE teachers (N=89) were included in this analysis. As can be seen in Table 2 (Appendix C), all but six of the elements illustrated significant differences at the $p < .001$. This finding demonstrated that the respondents rated the elements significantly higher on the importance scale than they did on the implementation scale.

Do the Respondents Differ in Their Ratings of Importance?

A multivariate analysis of variance procedure (MANOVA) was used to examine possible differences among the respondents in their perceptions of the importance of each best practice element for service delivery. For statistical purposes and due to their similar levels of interaction with supported employment programs, the LRE teachers and the caseworkers were grouped together resulting in the comparison of four respondent groups:

policymakers, program personnel from agencies providing supported employment services for one year or more, program personnel from agencies that were at the supported employment start up phase, and teachers/caseworkers (N=147). An analysis was run for each of the 13 element subcategories with the elements in each subcategory serving as the dependent variables of interest.

As illustrated in Table 6, the only subcategory analysis that resulted in an overall significant MANOVA was that of Planning, $F(30,377)=1.82$, $p < .05$. This finding indicated that there was a significant difference in the element ratings of the different groups. Two of the Planning elements displayed significant univariate results. For elements A1 (The program has a clear written mission statement emphasizing supported employment) and A8 (An advisory committee has been formed with family/caregiver, consumer, and employer representation), program personnel of existing programs rated them as being less important than did the policymakers, program personnel of new sites, and the teachers/caseworkers.

Do the Respondents Differ in Their Perceptions of Implementation of the Best Practice Elements?

MANOVAs were also used to analyze the implementation scale for three respondent groups: program personnel of sites offering services for one or more years, caseworkers, and LRE teachers (N=89). The program personnel of the start-up sites were not included in this analysis because their programs had not had the opportunity to implement many elements. Once again the caseworkers and the LRE teachers were combined into one group leaving only two groups to serve as independent variables. As with the importance scale, the

Table 6

Univariate Analysis of Variance for Comparison of the Policymakers, Program Personnel, and Teachers/Caseworkers Importance Ratings of the Planning Elements

Planning Subcategory Elements		DF	SS	MS	F#
A1	Mission Statement emphasizes Supported Employment	3	2.01	.671	3.97**
A2	Mission Statement does not exclude persons on the basis of severity of disability	3	1.76	.588	2.54
A3	An Annual Plan exists	3	2.44	.813	2.60
A4	Job descriptions for each staff member	3	1.48	.493	1.72
A5	Interagency Agreements have been developed	3	.53	.177	.54
A6	Plan to secure long-term support	3	.02	.008	.05
A7	Program offers training to staff and parents/guardians	3	.74	.250	.74
A8	Advisory Committee has been formed	3	4.16	1.390	2.80**
A9	Program Information is presented to concerned groups	3	1.04	.350	1.44
A10	A business image is presented	3	1.07	.358	2.14

#10 Planning elements: MANOVA (Hotelling-Lawley-Trace) F (30,377) = 1.82, $p < .05$.

*Policymakers, program personnel (new sites), teachers/caseworkers significantly greater than program personnel.

*$p < .05$.

analyses were run for each of the 13 element subcategories. The analyses results indicated that 12 of the 13 subcategories had significant differences beyond the .05 level (Table 7). The Collaboration-School Program subcategory was the only one that did not illustrate a significant difference in the responses of the two groups. In addition, the univariate analyses of 53 of the elements within each subcategory displayed significant results. These results documented that the program personnel of sites with established services evaluated these

elements as being implemented to a higher degree than did the caseworkers and teachers. The two groups, however, were consistent in their perceptions of the implementation of the elements in the Collaboration-School Program subcategory.

Suggested Elements and Comments

Two open-ended questions were included on the survey instrument. The first asked if respondents felt there were other elements of best practices that they thought should have been included on the instrument. The second open-ended question requested comments geared toward future efforts in providing supported employment services in Tennessee.

Only one respondent suggested additional elements. It was suggested that consumers be taught how to analyze the work setting, be involved in job development, interview for potential jobs, and be given the opportunity to be hired as staff members by service providers. The respondent also suggested that the attitudes of both potential staff members and employers be assessed prior to making commitments.

A total of 16 respondents wrote comments. Several different themes were represented by the comments including personnel training, publicizing of supported employment, transportation, funding coordination, sheltered workshop support, and supportive comments. Eight respondents addressed the issues of personnel training and funding coordination. Comments such as, "Tennessee needs to have training programs with college credit to promote professionalism in supported employment programs," were representative of those concerning personnel training. Some comments contained both the funding and training issues such as, "The major state departments have yet to establish a

Table 7

Univariate Analysis of Variance for Comparison of the Program Personnel, Caseworkers, and Teachers Implementation Ratings of the 13 Best Practice Element Subcategories

Best Practice Element Subcategories	No. of Elements With Significant Univariate Results	DF	F#
Planning	3	10,71	3.75***
Fiscal Management	3	4,82	4.98***
Personnel	5	6,80	3.75**
Collaboration-School Program	-	5,75	1.91
Collaboration-Community Resources	3	4,68	3.15*
Program Evaluation	3	4,82	4.10**
Quality of Work	6	6,78	7.78***
Paid Work	4	5,80	8.23***
Assess and Job Development	5	8,72	2.20*
Job Analyses	4	5,80	5.33***
On-Site Instruction	6	11,71	2.64**
On-Going Support	5	5,80	2.92*
Quality of Life	6	9,73	2.92*

#13 Best Practice Element Subcategories: MANOVA (Hotelling-Lawley-Trace).
* $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.
*** $p < .001$.

realistic plan with secured funding and training resources to make supported employment a viable service alternative to the state's entire disabled population."

The remainder of the respondents who offered comments covered the issues of transportation, sheltered workshops as a viable option for some, and favorable comments concerning supported employment programs. One such comment was, ". . . this program

is so important to these clients because it will prove that this labor market is untapped and yet these clients can do so much. Supported employment is in an avant-garde stage at this time and I'm proud to be a part of it."

Discussion

The major purposes of this research included the identification of best practices in supported employment and the investigation of the degree to which supported employment service providers agreed with the importance of the elements. Overall, the respondents did agree that the elements, as identified by a literature review and validated by experts in the field, were important for service delivery. Some elements, however, did receive more support than others. For instance, those elements that pertained to fiscal management, program personnel, community resources collaboration, quality of work, paid work, and on-going support received higher endorsements of importance. Those elements which fell into the areas of program planning, school collaboration, program evaluation, assessment and job development, job analyses, and on-site instruction received less overall support. It appears from this pattern of results that Tennesseans involved in supported employment were in overall agreement concerning the importance of program elements that could be considered directly related to the outcome of competitive employment, e.g., the agency staff is knowledgeable about current employment opportunities in the community. On the other hand, they were in less agreement about the importance of elements that could be considered less directly related to employment outcomes, e.g., an advisory committee has been formed with family/caregiver, consumer, and employer representation. According to Schalock (1988), programs within Phase I of development, Resources, concentrate on developing and

maintaining resources needed to provide services. These data suggest that at the time of this study supported employment programs were still in the Resources phase and focusing on the development of funding, personnel, consumer, and employment resources. As programs develop many turn to refining service delivery so that it is more systematic (Schalock, 1988). It is during the Systematic Phase that measurability and reporting come into focus. Because Tennessee supported employment programs are less than five years old, many have yet to move to the Systematic Phase; this may account for the lack of endorsement for the measurability and reportability issues of program planning, evaluation, school-collaboration, job analyses, and on-site instruction. On the other hand, it may be that the population served by these programs influenced the respondents' importance ratings. As documented in the Tennessee Supported Employment Program Status report (Petty, Dukes, & Henderson, 1990) those served were persons with mild or moderate retardation or chronic mental illness. In that the disabilities suggest a higher functioning participant group, it may be that program personnel did not perceive the importance of these elements for quality supported employment services.

Although it is clear that Tennessee professionals in supported employment did view best practices as being important for service delivery, a most interesting finding is that the very same professionals felt that these elements were not fully implemented in the state. The program service providers rated the elements as being more implemented than did the teachers and caseworkers; however, the total pattern of results indicated that all respondent groups saw Tennessee supported employment programs as not having fully incorporated the best practice elements. As with the importance ratings, those elements addressing

measurability and accountability, e.g., strategies for sharing and transferring responsibility from school to adult supported employment services are clearly documented and used, had the lowest implementation ratings. Elements that fell into the categories of program personnel and on-going support had higher implementation ratings demonstrating the fact that the programs, at the time of the survey, were still concentrating on the generation of resources that would maintain service delivery (Schalock, 1988).

The analyzed results as well as the respondents' written comments indicate that supported employment services in the state of Tennessee are highly valued and, to a large extent, reflect the state of the art. Individuals involved at various levels of service provision recognize the importance of best practice elements but also feel that Tennessee programs are not fully realizing these elements. The data clearly indicate that there are many facets of supported employment that need attention in order to increase service quality and, thereby, be accountable for the economic and work life improvement of those with developmental disabilities (Stark, Schalock, & Berland, 1986).

Future Implications and Recommendations

According to the data generated by the current survey, individuals involved in Tennessee supported employment programs agree that there exists a group of program elements that assure quality services. These same Tennesseans agree that these elements have not been fully implemented suggesting that programs have yet to evolve into the Systematic Phase of development (Schalock, 1988). It is at the systematic stage that programs branch away from concentrating on resource generation and move into the fine-tuning, accountability issues of service delivery. Some national agencies have already begun

work to facilitate this evolutionary growth; for example, in 1988 the Rehabilitation Services Administration facilitated the gathering of a group of "supported employment experts." Approximately 35 university professors, consumers, advocates, officials from federal agencies, and rehabilitation providers drafted recommendations and a national supported employment strategic plan. These included recommendations to compile existing databases for "Exemplary Supported Employment Practice" and to work toward some common understanding and promotion of quality practices. As these data are gathered, a more comprehensive picture of quality practices may emerge. In addition, the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) has developed relevant standards in the areas of supported employment. These standards are for assisting providers with performance evaluation as well as program development. The new standards will become effective on all site surveys conducted after June 30, 1990.

Mank, Buckley, and Rhodes (1990) have pointed out that available data on supported employment demonstrate that the initiative phase of this movement has ". . . long since begun. The issue now is one of extending access and changing the heart of state systems, where the responsibility rests for long-term success" (p.293). The authors pointed out that the assurance of quality in the implementation of supported employment is an essential goal. This does not mean that programs must be standardized; thereby, preventing flexibility and customized consumer services. Instead, the focus of quality assurance should be broad enough to address issues unique to various communities and consumers.

Based on the results of this survey and the experiences of the researchers, some recommendations are offered that are aimed at realizing the extension and improvement of Tennessee supported employment services. These are:

1. Continued movement in the development of a common understanding and implementation of quality practices in supported employment is necessary. This may be accomplished by:
   a. developing and refining a core of standards for supported employment programs;
   b. promoting a supported employment curriculum for the training of employment specialists, job coaches, and other staff;
   c. making available a best practice evaluation tool for program self-evaluation that would yield process and outcome information useful for decision-making;
   d. providing programs with technical assistance to address areas of need; and
   e. funding model programs and disseminating the outcomes.
2. A comprehensive, state-level staff development plan based on identified training needs would assure the availability of qualified staff at the programmatic level. This plan would be implemented by staff development providers and could address some of the training areas suggested by the best practices study. These might include the collaboration with school programs, the implementation of systematic program reviews, the assurance of quality employment opportunities for consumers, and consideration for the quality of life of consumers.

3. Social integration of the consumer at the workplace is a goal of supported employment. Demonstration efforts and various strategies could be studied in order to facilitate the ability of programs to obtain full integration for all consumers. The maintenance of social/recreational outlets may also be included in this investigation.
4. The promotion of better school collaboration may be achieved by:
   a. devising a system by which students would complete school with their age peers and transition into supported employment prior to age 22,
   b. promoting the usage of Transition Plans that would address the transition from school to supported employment, and
   c. developing incentives for adult service providers to collaborate with their local school systems.
5. Encourage service providers to consider collaborative solutions to difficulties by establishing business advisory committees or other community networking vehicles that would solicit participation from employers, parents, community leaders, and consumers.
6. As suggested by respondent comments, the existence and success of supported employment needs to be more fully advertised. In addition, disseminating success stories which demonstrate agency commitment, promoting consumer participation in program planning, providing effective consumer training, facilitating effective parent/caregiver networking, and reporting consumer

employment outcomes will serve to continue the expansion of quality supported employment services in the state of Tennessee.

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Appendix A

Best Practices in Supported Employment
Panel of Reviewers

Best Practices in Supported Employment
Panel of Reviewers

1. Dr. William Kiernan, Director, The Children's Hospital - Boston, Training and Research Institute for Adults with Disabilities.

2. Dr. Cynthia A. Langford, Assistant Professor, Louisiana State University Medical Center, Human Development Center.

3. Mr. Kent Logan, Coordinator, Georgia State University, TASH Technical Assistance Project.

4. Dr. David Mank, Assistant Professor, University of Oregon, The Employment Network.

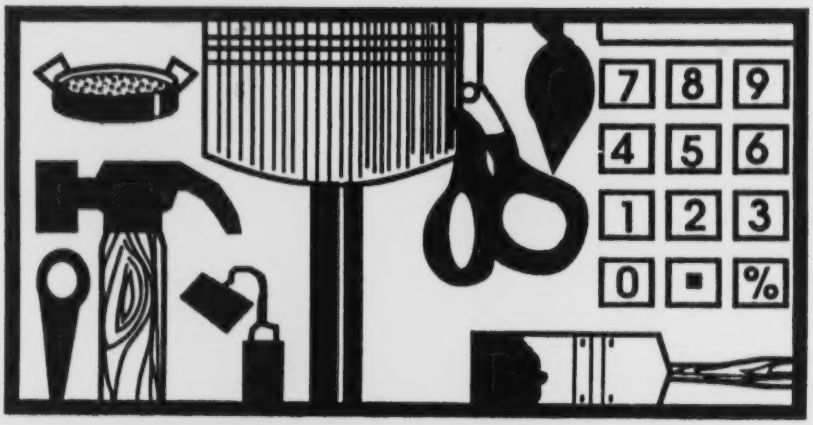
5. Dr. Larry Rhodes, Associate Director, University of Oregon, The Employment Network.

6. Dr. Paul Wehman, Professor, Virginia Commonwealth University, Rehabilitation and Research Training Center.

7. Ms. Gene Williams, Assistant Superintendent, Greene Valley Developmental Center, Tennessee.

Appendix B

Best Practices in Supported Employment (BPSE) Survey Instrument



BEST PRACTICES IN SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

A STATEWIDE SURVEY

This 1989 survey is a statewide effort to determine what Tennessee human service professionals, parents, and employers consider to be best practices in supported employment services for persons with severe disabilities. Please respond to all of the items. If you wish to comment or qualify your response, please feel free to use the space in the margins. Your comments will be read and taken into account.

"Best Practices in Supported Employment," a part of the Tennessee Initiative on Employment Project, is sponsored by the Tennessee Developmental Disabilities Planning Council and affiliated with the University of Tennessee, Memphis.

Thank you for your help.

Please return this survey to:

Tennessee Initiative on Employment Project
483 River Parkway, Suite 2
Sevierville, TN 37862

GENERAL INFORMATION

The purpose of this state-wide survey is to ascertain your opinion about the importance of best practices in supported employment services for persons with severe disabilities in Tennessee. In addition, we would like to learn about our states' current supported employment implementation practices.

As you review the elements of best practice, please keep in mind the following definitions:

DEFINITIONS

Supported Employment: Competitive work in integrated work settings for individuals with severe handicaps for whom competitive employment has not occurred, or for whom competitive employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a severe disability and who, because of their handicap, require ongoing support service to perform such work; Sec. 7, 1986 amendments (PL 99-506) to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Elements of Best Practice: Identified elements or items of quality indicators in supported employment programs, as validated by literature reviews and expert professional opinion, that will lead to successful job and service outcomes for persons with severe disabilities.

DIRECTIONS

Thinking about the elements of best practice in supported employment (S.E.), please rate the degree of **importance** of each element needed to deliver quality services to persons with severe disabilities. Your choices are: high importance, moderate importance, and low importance. Please circle your response.

Next rate the degree in which you think your program, or the program in which you are associated, is **implementing** each best practice element; either fully implemented, partially implemented, or not implemented.

Please respond to all of the items. If you wish to comment on any element or qualify your response, please use the margins. Your comments will be read and taken into account.

Thank you for your help.

ELEMENTS OF BEST PRACTICE IN SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

	How important are these elements of best practice? *(Circle number)*			To what degree are these elements implemented in the S.E. program? *(Circle number)*		
	HIGH IMPORTANCE	MODERATE IMPORTANCE	LOW IMPORTANCE	FULLY IMPLEMENTED	PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED	NOT IMPLEMENTED
ELEMENT CATEGORY I: ADMINISTRATION						
A. Planning						
1. The program has a clear written mission statement which emphasizes enhancing individual's lives through paid work in integrated community jobs with support to maintain their job.	3	2	1	3	2	1
2. The program's mission statement emphasizes integrated employment and support services, and does not exclude persons on the basis of severity of disability.	3	2	1	3	2	1
3. An Annual Plan exists which has specific objectives, identified staff responsibilities for implementing the plan, and timelines.	3	2	1	3	2	1
4. Job descriptions are written and current for each staff member with lines of supervision and responsibilities clearly delineated.	3	2	1	3	2	1
5. Interagency Agreements have been developed to promote comprehensive and coordinated service delivery among agencies.	3	2	1	3	2	1
6. The program has a plan to secure long-term support for consumers.	3	2	1	3	2	1
7. The agency demonstrates its commitment to supported employment by offering staff and parents/guardians in-service training and forums for discussion.	3	2	1	3	2	1
8. An advisory committee has been formed with family/caregiver, consumer, and employer representation.	3	2	1	3	2	1
9. There are specific attempts to interact with and present information to community businesses, community groups, consumer groups, families, schools, etc.	3	2	1	3	2	1
10. The program presents a business image.	3	2	1	3	2	1
B. Fiscal Management						
11. The host agency is fiscally solvent and stable.	3	2	1	3	2	1
12. There are allocations for staff development and training costs.	3	2	1	3	2	1
13. It is possible to track costs for supporting individuals in integrated employment.	3	2	1	3	2	1
14. The program has stable funding sources to provide the on-going support needed by its consumers.	3	2	1	3	2	1

	How important are these elements of best practice? *(Circle number)*			To what degree are these elements implemented in the S.E. program? *(Circle number)*		
	HIGH IMPORTANCE	MODERATE IMPORTANCE	LOW IMPORTANCE	FULLY IMPLEMENTED	PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED	NOT IMPLEMENTED
C. Personnel						
15. Program staff have the knowledge and communication skills to interact with a variety of agency representatives, parents, employers, and consumers.	3	2	1	3	2	1
16. Dress and grooming of program staff and consumers meet employer standards.	3	2	1	3	2	1
17. The agency staff is knowledgeable about current employment opportunities in the community.	3	2	1	3	2	1
18. The agency and its staff present an image of professional competence with a service to sell rather than handicapism and charity.	3	2	1	3	2	1
19. Job trainer job descriptions include advocacy support of consumers while in supported employment program.	3	2	1	3	2	1
20. The person responsible for job development has in-depth knowledge of both the targeted consumer and the training and support procedures available for use on the job.	3	2	1	3	2	1
D. Collaboration-School Programs						
21. Local school districts are encouraged to prepare students for supported employment through non-school, integrated vocational experiences.	3	2	1	3	2	1
22. Strategies for sharing and transferring responsibility from school to adult supported employment services are clearly documented and used.	3	2	1	3	2	1
23. Program personnel are directly involved with students before graduation from high school (IEP's, Transition Plans, direct training, consultation).	3	2	1	3	2	1
24. School and supported personnel are involved in a task force which focuses on transition and supported employment.	3	2	1	3	2	1
25. Supported personnel provide feedback to school districts on outcomes and status of graduates.	3	2	1	3	2	1
E. Collaboration-Community Resources						
26. Family and home supports are used to facilitate employment (e.g., transportation, job development, training).	3	2	1	3	2	1
27. The program identifies employment-related services that can be provided by community agencies to promote consumer continuation in present placement (e.g., transportation, housing, financial aid, recreation, etc.).	3	2	1	3	2	1
28. Individualized services are documented and include interagency cooperation that focuses on long-term employment.	3	2	1	3	2	1

	How important are these elements of best practice? *(Circle number)*			To what degree are these elements implemented in the S.E. program? *(Circle number)*		
	HIGH IMPORTANCE	MODERATE IMPORTANCE	LOW IMPORTANCE	FULLY IMPLEMENTED	PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED	NOT IMPLEMENTED
29. Coordination is provided so that each individual's finances are maximized (e.g., pay, government financial aid, work benefits).	3	2	1	3	2	1
F. Program Evaluation						
30. An annual external program review is conducted by the participating community of professionals, consumers, and family/caregivers.	3	2	1	3	2	1
31. An internal review is conducted which includes an evaluation of the program's goals, objectives, and measurable outcomes.	3	2	1	3	2	1
32. Case reviews occur to assess the quality of individualized consumer plans.	3	2	1	3	2	1
33. Participant characteristics, employment characteristics, and outcomes are reviewed routinely and information is used to improve program services.	3	2	1	3	2	1
ELEMENT CATEGORY II. PROGRAMMATIC ISSUES						
A. Quality of Work						
34. One-to-one training and support is available for as long as the consumer is employed.	3	2	1	3	2	1
35. The general working conditions of the job settings are safe, integrated, and accessible.	3	2	1	3	2	1
36. Jobs are stable rather than temporary or seasonal positions.	3	2	1	3	2	1
37. Jobs have a low rate of co-worker and supervisor turnover.	3	2	1	3	2	1
38. Pay and benefits are based upon productivity, commensurate with wages/benefits received by co-workers.	3	2	1	3	2	1
39. Jobs have opportunities for advancement, pay increases, benefits, and increases in responsibilities.	3	2	1	3	2	1
B. Paid Work						
40. Employer and program staff are in agreement about the consumer's job responsibilities.	3	2	1	3	2	1
41. If Targeted Jobs Tax Credit (TJTC) documents and other employer incentives are used, all are completed prior to employment.	3	2	1	3	2	1
42. Consumers are paid directly by employers, both at regular and sub-minimum wage.	3	2	1	3	2	1
43. Commensurate and/or minimum wages are sought before considering sub-minimum wages.	3	2	1	3	2	1
44. Employer initiated Department of Labor work certificates for sub-minimum wages are the preferred option for consumer payment over an agency contracting with employers.	3	2	1	3	2	1

	How important are these elements of best practice? (Circle number)			To what degree are these elements implemented in the S.E. program? (Circle number)		
	HIGH IMPORTANCE	MODERATE IMPORTANCE	LOW IMPORTANCE	FULLY IMPLEMENTED	PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED	NOT IMPLEMENTED
C. Assessment and Job Development						
45. A comprehensive vocational assessment (which describes consumer's strengths, skills, routines, experiences, and living situation) is developed to guide job development efforts.	3	2	1	3	2	1
46. Assessments used to identify potential jobs are based upon the local labor market and environmental factors (e.g., where the applicant lives, what transportation options are available) instead of solely upon traditional vocational evaluation procedures like work samples, psychological tests, and readiness checklists.	3	2	1	3	2	1
47. Social and communication skills do not exclude consumers from integrated employment opportunities.	3	2	1	3	2	1
48. Individually-tailored job responsibilities are negotiated for employees.	3	2	1	3	2	1
49. Job development efforts are directed by the skills, abilities, and interests of the consumer.	3	2	1	3	2	1
50. Job developers brainstorm with staff, parents, and potential consumers to identify job possibilities.	3	2	1	3	2	1
51. Whenever feasible, jobs are developed in close proximity to the consumer's place of residence.	3	2	1	3	2	1
52. Adaptations and modifications are utilized as needed to perform the job to employer standards (e.g., alternative communication modes, sequencing cards, counting jigs).	3	2	1	3	2	1
D. Job Analyses						
53. Employment sites are assessed on an array of quality indicators (potential for interactions with nondisabled co-workers, wages, working conditions, etc.) prior to employment.	3	2	1	3	2	1
54. Detailed job site analysis of all critical work components, work-related routines, and work environments are conducted before employment begins.	3	2	1	3	2	1
55. Physical and social integration opportunities are an integral part of job site analysis.	3	2	1	3	2	1
56. Potential job sites are routinely analyzed in relation to the possibility of narrowing or combining existing job responsibilities to suit individual needs.	3	2	1	3	2	1
57. Job trainers perform job duties prior to the consumer's first day of work.	3	2	1	3	2	1

	How important are these elements of best practice? *(Circle number)*			To what degree are these elements implemented in the S.E. program? *(Circle number)*		
	HIGH IMPORTANCE	MODERATE IMPORTANCE	LOW IMPORTANCE	FULLY IMPLEMENTED	PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED	NOT IMPLEMENTED
E. On-Site Instruction						
58. Instructional strategies are individualized.	3	2	1	3	2	1
59. Consumers receive direct training in actual situations and environments where skills (work, social, communication) are to be used.	3	2	1	3	2	1
60. Behavior problems are viewed as a form of communication, indicating areas where skills for more appropriate behaviors must be acquired and practiced.	3	2	1	3	2	1
61. Ongoing assessment and monitoring strategies are utilized to identify and address job site problems.	3	2	1	3	2	1
62. Task analyses are developed for all job duties and are the bases of individualized instructional programs.	3	2	1	3	2	1
63. Decisions to change instruction and/or job modifications are based on regular data collection and review.	3	2	1	3	2	1
64. Training or supporting interactions with nondisabled co-workers is a part of job training responsibilities.	3	2	1	3	2	1
65. Job trainers adapt training strategies to approximate those procedures and consequences utilized in the employment setting.	3	2	1	3	2	1
66. Job trainers utilize training strategies that meet the consumer's needs and ensure that the employer's standards are met (e.g., quality, safety, productivity requirements).	3	2	1	3	2	1
67. Systematic plans for decreasing intervention time (fading) at the job site are documented and followed by job trainers.	3	2	1	3	2	1
68. Job trainers facilitate increased co-worker involvement with consumers as they decrease time (fade) at the job site.	3	2	1	3	2	1
F. On-Going Support						
69. Individuals supported by the program require regular on-going support to maintain employment.	3	2	1	3	2	1
70. On-going support is regularly provided to sustain the employee on the job.	3	2	1	3	2	1
71. Intensity and type of support varies according to individual needs.	3	2	1	3	2	1
72. Re-employment assistance is provided to workers changing jobs to ensure the continuation of integrated employment.	3	2	1	3	2	1
73. Feedback is obtained on a regular basis from consumers, employers, co-workers, family/caregivers, and others about their satisfaction with the programs' support services.	3	2	1	3	2	1

	How important are these elements of best practice? *(Circle number)*			To what degree are these elements implemented in the S.E. program? *(Circle number)*		
	HIGH IMPORTANCE	MODERATE IMPORTANCE	LOW IMPORTANCE	FULLY IMPLEMENTED	PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED	NOT IMPLEMENTED
6. Quality of Life						
74. Consumers are offered choices in the selection of jobs.	3	2	1	3	2	1
75. Consumers are treated respectfully in an age-appropriate manner.	3	2	1	3	2	1
76. Parents/caregivers are supported in assisting workers in using their pay to purchase recreation activities, to select and buy personal needs, and to do banking if necessary.	3	2	1	3	2	1
77. Breaks, lunch, and other non-work functions of the job are an important focus of training.	3	2	1	3	2	1
78. Consumers are assisted in obtaining after work social/recreational activities with nondisabled individuals.	3	2	1	3	2	1
79. Normalized transportation options are utilized, e.g., public transportation, carpooling.	3	2	1	3	2	1
80. Consumers are assisted in obtaining and maintaining friendships.	3	2	1	3	2	1
81. Consumers are actively involved in the planning, decision-making, and delivery of supported employment services.	3	2	1	3	2	1
82. When appropriate, consumers are assisted in locating adult education opportunities and are coordinated with supported employment activities.	3	2	1	3	2	1

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

We would like for you to provide us information about your education, job, and training in supported employment to help us better understand your opinions.

Q-1 Which is the highest degree of education you have completed? *(Circle number)*

1 HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA
2 BACCALAUREATE
3 MASTERS
4 SPECIALIST
5 DOCTORATE

Q-2 What is the major field of the highest degree you have earned?

MAJOR FIELD: _____

Q-3 What is your job title?

JOB TITLE: _____

Q-4 How many years have you been employed in an education or a habilitation/rehabilitation related job?

YEARS: _____

Q-5 Are you involved in the supported employment initiative (i.e., providing services, case management, developing/ overseeing procedural guidelines, etc.)?

1 NO
2 YES . . . . . HOW LONG? _____
MONTHS/YEARS

Q-6 Which of the following best describes the majority of your training in supported employment? *(Circle number)*

1 NO TRAINING
2 PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS
3 ON-THE-JOB TRAINING
4 SPECIAL INSTITUTES
5 WORKSHOPS/CONFERENCES
6 COLLEGE CLASSES
7 GRADUATE DEGREE
8 OTHER (Please specify: _____)

Q-7 What is your perceived level of expertise about supported employment for persons with severe disabilities? *(Circle number)*

1 EXPERT
2 ALMOST EXPERT
3 IN TRAINING
4 NOVICE
5 NOT VERY KNOWLEDGEABLE

Q-8 Would you be interested in receiving technical training in supported employment? *(Circle number)*

1 NO
2 YES (Go to Q-9) ↴

Q-9 If YES, what type of training format best meets your needs? *(Circle number)*

1 WORKSHOPS/CONFERENCES
2 SPECIAL SEMINARS
3 COLLEGE CREDIT CLASSES
4 TELE-COURSES
5 ON-SITE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
6 OTHER (Specify: _____)

Are there any other elements of best practices in supported employment that you would like to include? If so, please use this space for that purpose.

Also, any comments you wish to make about future efforts in providing supported employment services in Tennessee will be appreciated, either here or in a separate letter.

Please take a few minutes and check that you have responded to all the items on every page. Once you have completed the survey, please refold it an mail it in the enclosed postage-paid envelope.

Your contribution to this effort is greatly appreciated. If you would like a summary of results, please print your name and address on the back of the return envelope (NOT on this survey). We will see that you get it.

Appendix C

Table 2

Importance and Implementation Rating Means and Percentages of Best Practice Elements as Perceived by Supported Employment Personnel

Table 2

Importance and Implementation Rating Means and Percentages of Best Practice Elements as Perceived by Supported Employment Personnel

Best Practice Elements		Importance Means All Groups	% Responding High Importance	Implementation Means All Groups	% Responding Fully Implemented
I.	ADMINISTRATION				
A.	Planning				
1.	The program has a clear written mission statement which emphasizes enhancing individual's lives through paid work in integrated community jobs with support to maintain their job.	2.80*	81%**	2.36	45%
2.	The program's mission statement emphasizes integrated employment and support services, and does not exclude persons on the basis of severity of disability.	2.74*	76%**	2.31	44%
3.	An Annual Plan exists which has specific objectives, identified staff resonsibilities for implementing the plan, and timelines.	2.61*	66%	2.20	39%
4.	Job Descriptions are written and current for each staff member with lines of supervision and responsibilities clearly delineated.[b]	2.63*	66%	2.40	52%
5.	Interagency Agreements have been developed to promote comprehensive and coordinated service delivery among agencies.	2.66*	71%	2.20	35%
6.	The program has a plan to secure long-term support for consumers.	2.80*	82%**	2.19	33%
7.	The agency demonstrates its commitment to supported employment by offering staff and parents/guardians in-service training and forums for discussion.	2.56*	60%	1.97	23%
8.	An advisory committee has been formed with family/caregiver, consumer, and employer respresentation.	2.30[a]	45%[a]	1.57	15%
9.	There are specific attempts to interact with and present information to community businesses, community schools, consumer groups, families, schools, etc.	2.65*	66%	2.17	30%

(Table 2 continues)

	Best Practice Elements	Importance Means All Groups	% Responding High Importance	Implementation Means All Groups	% Responding Fully Implemented
10.	The program presents a business image.	2.81*	82%**	2.32	43%
B.	<u>Fiscal Management</u>				
11.	The host agency is fiscally solvent and stable.[b]	2.86*	88%**	2.71	78%
12.	There are allocations for staff development and training costs.	2.75*	77%**	2.36	49%
13.	It is possible to track costs for supporting individuals in integrated employment.	2.62*	64%	2.16	40%
14.	The program has stable funding sources to provide the on-going support needed by its consumers.	2.90*	90%**	2.32	43%
C.	<u>Personnel</u>				
15.	Program staff have the knowledge and communication skills to interact with a variety of agency representatives, parents, employers, and consumers.	2.92*	93%**	2.56	57%
16.	Dress and grooming of program staff and consumers meet employer standards.[b]	2.74*	75%**	2.64	66%
17.	The agency staff is knowledgeable about current employment opportunities in the community.	2.90*	90%**	2.36	40%
18.	The agency and its staff present an image of professional competence with a service to sell rather than handicapism and charity.	2.95*	95%**	2.60	64%
19.	Job trainer job descriptions include advocacy support of consumers in while supported employment program.	2.56*	58%	2.15	38%
20.	The person responsible for job development has in-depth knowledge of both the targeted consumer and the training and support procedures available for use on the job.	2.85*	87%**	2.27	38%
D.	<u>Collaboration-School Programs</u>				
21.	Local school districts are encouraged to prepare students for supported employment through non-school, integrated vocational experiences.	2.61*	70%	1.90	21%

(Table 2 continues)

Best Practice Elements		Importance Means All Groups	% Responding High Importance	Implementation Means All Groups	% Responding Fully Implemented
22.	Strategies for sharing and transferring responsibility from school to adult supported employment services are clearly documented and used.	2.57**	64%	1.63	13%
23.	Program personnel are directly involved with students before graduation from high school (IEP's, Transition Plans, direct training, consultation).	2.59*	68%	1.68	17%
24.	School and supported personnel are involved in a task force with focuses on transition and supported employment.	2.43	56%	1.63	15%
25.	Supported personnel provide feedback to school districts on outcomes and staus of graduates.	2.33°	48%°	1.43	10%
E.	Collaboration-Community Resources				
26.	Family and home supports are used to facilitate employment (e.g., transportation, job development, training).	2.79*	80%**	2.12	27%
27.	The program identifies employment related services that can be provided by community agencies to promote consumer continuation in present placement (e.g., transportation, housing, financial aid, recreation, etc.)	2.74*	76%**	2.22	32%
28.	Individualized services are documented and include interagency cooperation that focuses on long-term employment.	2.64*	68%	2.15	35%
29.	Coordination is provided so that each individual's finances are maximized (e.g., pay, government financial aid, work benefits).	2.79*	80%**	2.21	39%
F.	Program Evaluation				
30.	An annual external program review is conducted by the participating community of professionals, consumers, and family/caregivers.	2.34°	46%°	1.70	24%
31.	An internal review is conducted which includes an evaluation of the program's goals, objectives, and measurable outcomes.	2.67*	69%	2.16	38%
32.	Case reviews occur to assess the quality of individualized consumer plans.	2.68*	71%	2.17	37%

(Table 2 continues)

Best Practice Elements		Importance Means All Groups	% Responding High Importance	Implementation Means All Groups	% Responding Fully Implemented
33.	Participant characteristics, employment characteristics, and outcomes are reviewed routinely and information is used to improve program services.	2.68*	73%	2.15	38%
II.	**PROGRAMMATIC ISSUES**				
A.	**Quality of Work**				
34.	One-to-one training and support is available for as long as the consumer is employed.	2.72*	75%**	2.28	42%
35.	The general working conditions of the job settings are safe, integrated, and accessible.	2.95*	95%**	2.58	64%
36.	Jobs are stable rather than temporary or seasonal positions.	2.69*	70%	2.30	42%
37.	Jobs have a low rate of co-worker and supervisor turnover.	2.46[a]	49%[a]	1.99	18%
38.	Pay and benefits are based upon productivity, commensurate with wages/benefits received by co-workers.	2.83*	84%**	2.49	60%
39.	Jobs have opportunities for advancement, pay increases, benefits, and increases in responsibilities.	2.66*	67%	2.13	31%
B.	**Paid Work**				
40.	Employer and program staff are in agreement about the consumer's job responsibilities.	2.92*	92%**	2.62	67%
41.	If Targeted Jobs Tax Credit (TJTC) documents and other employer incentives are used, all are completed prior to employment.	2.68*	71%	2.27	49%
42.	Consumers are paid directly by employers, both at regular and sub-minimum wage.	2.69*	72%	2.40	48%
43.	Commensurate and/or minimum wages are sought before considering sub-minimum wages.[b]	2.87*	88%**	2.67	74%
44.	Employer initiated Department of Labor work certificates are the preferred option for consumer payment over an agency contracting with employers.	2.29[a]	49%[a]	1.76	26%

(Table 2 continues)

Best Practice Elements		Importance Means All Groups	% Responding High Importance	Implementation Means All Groups	% Responding Fully Implemented
C.	**Assessment and Job Development**				
45.	A comprehensive vocational assessment (which describes consumer's strengths, skills, routines, experiences, and living situation) is developed to guide job development efforts.	2.72*	74%	2.35	46%
46.	Assessments used to identify potential jobs are based upon the local labor market and environmental factors (e.g., where the applicant lives, what transportation options are available) instead of solely upon traditional vocational evaluation procedures like work samples, psychological tests, and readiness checklists.	2.81*	81%**	2.39	51%
47.	Social and communication skills do not exclude consumers from integrated employment opportunities.	2.66*	67%	2.34	43%
48.	Individually-tailored job responsibilities are negotiated for employees.[b]	2.57*	60%	2.27	41%
49.	Job development efforts are directed by the skills, abilities, and interests of the consumer.	2.82*	82%**	2.44	50%
50.	Job developers brainstorm with staff, parents, and potential consumers to identify job possibilities.	2.75*	76%**	2.27	40%
51.	Whenever feasible, jobs are developed in close proximity to the consumer's place of residence.	2.66*	69%	2.32	42%
52.	Adaptations and modifications are utilized as needed to perform the job to employer standards (e.g., alternative communication modes, sequencing cards, counting jigs).	2.80*	82%**	2.25	41%
D.	**Job Analyses**				
53.	Employment sites are assessed on an array of quality indicators (potential for interactions with nondisabled co-workers, wages, working conditions, etc.) prior to employment.	2.69*	73%	2.28	44%
54.	Detailed job site analysis of all critical work components, work-related routines, and work environments are conducted before employment begins.	2.65*	70%	2.17	32%

(Table 2 continues)

Best Practice Elements		Importance Means All Groups	% Responding High Importance	Implementation Means All Groups	% Responding Fully Implemented
55.	Physical and social integration opportunities are an integral part of job site analysis.	2.59*	61%	2.23	34%
56.	Potential job sites are routinely analyzed in relation to the possibility of narrowing or combining existing job responsibilities to suit individual needs.	2.49	56%	2.03	26%
57.	Job trainers perform job duties prior to the consumer's first day of work.	2.59*	61%	2.21	38%
E.	<u>On-Site Instruction</u>				
58.	Instructional strategies are individualized.	2.89*	90%**	2.59	64%
59.	Consumers receive direct training in actual situations and environments where skills (work, social, communication) are to be used.	2.87*	88%**	2.51	59%
60.	Behavior problems are viewed as a form of communication, indicating areas where skills for more appropriate behaviors must be acquired and practiced.	2.70*	72%	2.34	41%
61.	Ongoing assessment and monitoring strategies are utilized to identify and address job site problems.	2.76*	77%**	2.35	45%
62.	Task analyses are developed for all job duties and are the basis of individualized instructional programs.	2.53*	59%	2.22	37%
63.	Decisions to change instruction and/or job modifications are based on regular data collection and review.	2.49	55%	2.14	28%
64.	Training or supporting interactions with nondisabled co-workers is a part of job training responsibilities.	2.70*	71%	2.22	38%
65.	Job trainers adapt training strategies to approximate those procedures and consequences utilized in the employment setting.	2.68*	70%	2.20	34%
66.	Job trainers utilize training strategies that meet the consumer's needs and ensure that the employer's standards are met (e.g., quality, safety, productivity requirements).	2.92*	92%**	2.56	61%

(Table 2 continues)

Best Practice Elements		Importance Means All Groups	% Responding High Importance	Implementation Means All Groups	% Responding Fully Implemented
67.	Systematic plans for decreasing intervention time (fading) at the job site are documented and followed by the job trainers.	2.64*	68%	2.20	41%
68.	Job trainers facilitate increased co-worker involvement with consumers as they decrease time (fade) at the job site.	2.66*	68%	2.16	33%
F.	<u>On-Going Support</u>				
69.	Individuals supported by the program require regular on-going support to maintain employment.	2.76*	79%**	2.49	55%
70.	On-going support regularly provided is directly related to sustaining employment.	2.83*	85%**	2.43	55%
71.	Intensity and type of support varies according to individual needs.	2.92*	92%**	2.64	73%
72.	Re-employment assistance is provided to workers changing jobs to ensure the continuation of integrated employment.	2.83%*	83%**	2.25	47%
73.	Feedback is obtained on a regular basis from consumers, employers, co-workers, family/caregivers, and others about their satisfaction with the programs' support services.	2.82*	85%**	2.40	51%
G.	<u>Quality of Life</u>				
74.	Consumers are offered choices in the selection of jobs.	2.74*	78%**	2.25	39%
75.	Consumers are treated respectfully in the age-appropriate manner.[b]	2.95*	95%**	2.82	83%
76.	Parents/caregivers are supported in assisting workers in using their pay to purchase recreation activities, to select and buy personal needs, and to do banking if necessary.	2.59*	64%	2.22	38%
77.	Breaks, lunch, and other non-work functions of the job are an important focus of training.	2.72*	75%**	2.46	53%
78.	Consumers are assisted in obtaining after work social/recreational activities with nondisabled individuals.	2.39[a]	48%[a]	1.84	22%

(Table 2 continues)

Best Practice Elements		Importance Means All Groups	% Responding High Importance	Implementation Means All Groups	% Responding Fully Implemented
79.	Normalized transportation options are utilized, e.g., public transportation, carpooling.	2.74*	77%**	2.23	41%
80.	Consumers are assisted in obtaining and maintaining friendships.	2.47*	51%*	1.98	22%
81.	Consumers are actively involved in the planning, decision-making, and delivery of supported employment services.	2.73*	75%**	2.16	35%
82.	When appropriate, consumers are assisted in locating adult education opportunities and are coordinated with supported employment activities.	2.56*	60%	2.09	34%

* Met acceptance criterion: 2.50 on 3-point importance scale.
** Met acceptance criterion: 75% of respondents rated as High Importance.
*** Met acceptance criterion: 70% of respondents rated as Fully Implemented.

[a] Less than 55% of respondents rated as High Importance and had less than 2.50 mean.

[b] Elements that did not result in significant t test comparison of the Importance and Implementation scales. Remaining elements were significant.

SECTION III: CUSTOMER EVALUATION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Job Site Supervisors' Opinions About Best Practices in Supported Employment

Debra Martin Petty and Melinda Dukes

With

Wes H. Martin, Elizabeth Fussell, and LeWanna Edwards

Job Site Supervisors' Opinions About Best Practices in Supported Employment

The provision of supported employment for persons with disabilities has increased dramatically in the last five years. The impetus for this rapid growth has been the substantial investment made by the federal government to expand supported employment nationally. As a result, people with disabilities have the opportunity to receive the direct training and support they need to get and keep community jobs (McDonnell, Nofs, Hardman, & Chambless, 1989).

Three elements seem to contribute to the success of supported employment: (a) competitive work, (b) in integrated work settings, with (c) the provision of on-going support services (Federal Register, August 14, 1987). Workers engaged in supported employment are placed into competitive jobs where they earn wages and other benefits and work predominantly among workers without disabilities (Rusch, 1986). Also, the provision of on-going support services greatly enhances worker retention (Wehman, Hill, Hill, Brooke, Pendleton, & Britt, 1985). On-going support received while working, such as periodic supervision, personal-care assistance, retraining, and supervised transportation (Bellamy, Rhodes, Mank, & Albin, 1988), clearly keeps the focus of supported employment on long-term job retention.

A crucial assumption of supported employment set forth by Shafer, Seyfarth, Hill, and Wehman (1989),

> ". . . is that appropriate employment opportunities are available within the community and that employers are willing to hire workers with disabilities. Successful supported employment requires the cooperation, understanding, and support of employers . . ."

They continued to say that, "employers play a pivotal role by allowing continued job site access to the job coach in order to provide long-term services."

An investigation conducted by Rusch, Minch, and Hughes (1989) confirmed that job site supervisors are involved in the "long-term employment of employees with disabilities." They were directly involved in providing some support, including job placement, job site training, ongoing assessment, and follow along supervision. This investigation suggested that supervisors contribute significantly to job retention.

Employer focus groups, conducted by Naeve, Allen, Harding, and Shea (1990), revealed that the employers intended to continue or expand participation in the supported employment program. Their intentions were strictly based on "dollars and cents economics." The three groups agreed that employees with disabilities were performing, that they were not treated differently than employees without apparent disabilities, and that they were evaluated on the same standards as other employees. The focus groups emphasized the importance of tax credits in the decision process. They also pointed out that the value of supported employment will have to be sold to top management.

Many have suggested (Allen, Biggs, Sanford, Scavarda, & Scott, 1987; Bellamy, Mank, Rhodes, & Albin, 1988; Nisbet & Callahan, 1989; Shalock, 1987) that successful supported employment outcomes may be attributed to quality program indicators or elements of best practice. These quality indicators can be translated into measurements of a program's worth as viewed by the program's customers.

Recognizing employers as vital customers of supported employment and as the mainstay of its success, their opinions were identified as a part of a Best Practices in

Supported Employment study conducted in Tennessee. Consequently, an investigation was conducted to determine job site supervisors' opinions about the implementation of the major components of supported employment: job placement, paid work, assessment and training, integration, and on-going support.

The research questions that guided this study were:

1. How do job site supervisors evaluate the implementation of best practices in supported employment?
2. Do program personnel of supported employment programs agree with supervisors about their implementation efforts?
3. What was the overall satisfaction level of job site supervisors toward Tennessee supported employment programs?

Method

Participants

The participants of the study were job site supervisors employed by Tennessee companies who directly supervised supported employees. Fifteen job site supervisors agreed to participate in interviews which were conducted during March of 1990. Supported employment provider agencies across the state assisted in identifying these supervisors. The majority of the supervisors' companies were located in non-urban cities and represented a range of occupational areas including food service, lodging, light industrial, retail, and janitorial/maintenance. The average number of employees hired by these companies was 40 with a range from 5.5 to 195 employees. On average, each company hired two workers with disabilities.

Procedures

To obtain supervisor evaluations of the supported employment program, best practice elements were identified in the literature and validated by a nationally recognized panel of experts. Elements pertaining specifically to the supervisor were carefully selected, rephrased into questions, and included in an interview guide. Also, appropriate interview questions developed by Rusch, Minch, and Hughes (1989) for a study on job site supervisors' roles in the long-term employment of persons with severe disabilities were incorporated. Topics of the questions were job placement, paid work, assessment and training, integration, on-going support, supervisor satisfaction, and company demographics. The 24 questions required yes/no, ratings, and open-ended responses. The interview questions may be found in the Appendix.

Job site supervisor responses were described using descriptive data analyses (i.e., frequencies, percentages, rank order, averages) and then compared to implementation ratings (or self-ratings) of program personnel. In October of 1989, program personnel (N=59) from 36 agencies providing supported employment services were asked to rate the degree to which their agencies were implementing pre-identified elements of best practices in supported employment. These elements are also contained in the Appendix.

By telephone, job site supervisors consented to participate in a 30-minute interview that took place at the job site. The interviewers were knowledgeable of supported employment and were employed as a staff trainer, a technical assistance provider, or an employment specialist. Interviews were tape recorded so that supervisor comments could be accurately interpreted in the results.

Results

All 15 identified job site supervisors agreed to the interview and the results were used in this study. The results were organized by the topical sections addressed in the interview: job placement, paid work, assessment and training, integration, and on-going support. In addition, supervisor responses were described and compared with program personnel's ratings of implementation.

Job Placement

The interview questions of this section pertained to factors influencing the job site supervisors' decision to hire consumers with disabilities and to the consumers' characteristics that may have influenced hiring. As shown in Table 1, the supervisors indicated that such factors as conducting a positive interview with the applicant (67%), the company's interest in hiring persons with disabilities (67%), and the job developer's presentation (67%) had the greatest influence on hiring persons with disabilities. Also, the fact that program staff would provide training and support (53%) greatly influenced their decision. Some employers thought it was their civic duty to hire persons with disabilities, while others were influenced by the concept of supported employment and wanted to give it a try.

Program personnel had different perceptions than the job site supervisors about the factors included in Table 1. Less than half (48%) of program personnel thought that the "job developer was completely knowledgeable about the consumer's abilities", whereas most (67%) supervisors were greatly influenced by this factor. Sixty-three percent of the program

Table 1

Factors that Influence Job Site Supervisors' Decisions to Hire Supported Employees

Factors		Influence			
		Great		Some	
*Rank		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Positive interview with the job applicant	10	(67%)	5	(33%)
2	Company's interest in hiring persons with disabilities	10	(67%)	4	(27%)
3	Job developer appeared knowledgeable of employee's abilities	10	(67%)	4	(27%)
4	Program staff would provide training and support	8	(53%)	5	(33%)
5	Program staff presented a professional image	7	(47%)	6	(40%)
6	Need to fill job	7	(47%)	3	(20%)
7	Handicapped people make good workers	5	(33%)	4	(27%)
8	Job compatibility with employee skills and interest	4	(27%)	6	(40%)
9	Compliance with federal laws to hire persons with disabilities	1	(7%)	1	(7%)

*Ranked by item of greatest influence.

personnel group rated their level of matching "job compatibility with the consumers' skills and interest" as fully implemented; supervisors were less influenced by this factor. Supervisors were greatly influenced by "staff presents a professional image" and "provision of training and support." In turn, program personnel felt that these elements were fully implemented (53%, 62%).

As for the supervisor-consumer job interview, supervisors rated several characteristics that influenced them to hire the applicant. The applicant's need to work and his/her presentation and appearance had the greatest impact. In addition, honesty, availability, good social skills, interest in position, interview skills, and work history greatly influenced hiring decisions. From these results, it could be said that a positive job interview had great impact on the supervisor's decision to hire.

Paid Work

Questions in this section focused on career path opportunities, employee retention rate, and direct payment vs. agency-employer contract work. Over 93% (or 14) of the supervisors indicated that supported employees had opportunities for pay increases, benefits, and increased responsibilities; although, some stated that there was little opportunity for advancement in the company since more complex or technical skills were needed beyond entry-level positions. Less than half (41%) of the program personnel group felt that they had developed jobs that met these criteria.

The next question of this section dealt with the average monthly employee retention rate for all employees. A six-month retention rate was selected as an indicator of successful job retention. This indicator was selected ". . . based upon comparative data showing that the average length of work histories for entry-level food service and janitorial jobs by nonhandicapped persons is less than six months" (Wehman et al., 1985). The majority of jobs represented were of these types. All supervisors rated their employee retention rate at six months or more. When asked if the rate differed for employees with disabilities, 40% (or 6) stated that the rate was the same; 33% (or 5) thought that the employees with

disabilities stayed longer; and 27% (or 4) indicated that it was too soon to tell because the employees had not been employed very long.

Over 90% of the supervisors paid the supported employee directly rather than through agency contracts. Half of the program personnel group indicated that the consumers were paid directly by the employer. As for wages, the Tennessee Supported Employment Program Status Report (Petty, Dukes, & Henderson, 1990) indicated that 23 out of 36 agencies reported average hourly wages earned by supported employees as $3.63. These data infer that the majority of employees were paid directly by the employer at minimum wage and above.

Assessment and Training

The questions of this section pertained to assessment of the job and the consumer and the direct training received by the consumer at the job site. Seventy-five percent of the supervisors reported that most supported employees needed no job modification. However, the remaining supervisors indicated that job modifications were made by simplifying oral or written job performace directions, redesigning the position by modifying the number or type of job tasks that the supported employee performed, allowing the employee to change tasks within the employment setting once it was determined that the employee was capable of performing other tasks, and being willing to change working hours to accommodate the employee's schedule. Ninety-one percent of the supervisors agreed that the employment specialist, or job coach, discussed the changes with them before they were made.

The program personnel also indicated that a high degree of job modification was not needed. About 40% of this group indicated that they were partially implementing job

modifications and utilizing adaptations at the job site. The data strongly suggested that the consumers served were capable of performing the selected jobs with little modification.

The supervisors were asked if they would allow an evaluation of the job to possibly enhance the employee's abilities to perform the job. Three-fourths of them said "yes." However, 48% of the program personnel reported that they were partially implementing job analyses.

Expecting the employment specialist to perform the job before the supported employee began work was identified as a best practice element. Ninety percent of the supervisors said that they would allow the employment specialist to perform the job, and many commented that they preferred that the employment specialist learn the job first: "It's hard to teach if they don't know how to do it themselves." Only 33% of the supervisors indicated that this actually occurred. Less than half (48%) of the program personnel group reported that this element was fully implemented.

A significant element of supported employment is direct training and support received by the consumer in actual situations and environments where skills are to be used. Eighty percent of the supervisors stated that the supported employee received direct training from the employment specialist. The remaining supervisors (20%) expressed that they would welcome direct training support from the employment specialist. One third of the program personnel group rated this element as partially implemented or not implemented.

While the employee was in training, all 15 supervisors stated that the employment specialist obtained feedback about the employee's performance on a regular basis. Program

personnel rated their work in this area lower than did the supervisors; 58% perceived that they were obtaining feedback all of the time and 39% some of the time.

Some supervisors indicated that the employee's performance increased after the employment specialist began fading from the employment setting. They thought that perhaps the employee was too dependent on the employment specialist or that there were "personality differences" between the employee and the employment specialist. One supervisor was very disappointed in the amount of training provided by the employment specialist. The employment specialist was at the employment setting for only two days and the supervisor had expected more. He personally trained the employee.

In addition to the support received by the employment specialist, the supported employees received assistance from the supervisors. During the employee's training, over 60% of the supervisors reported that they were greatly involved in performing job-related activities. Ten supervisors were greatly involved in assessing the employee's performance, nine were involved in orienting the employee to the job, and six reported that they motivated the employee. Thirty-three percent (or 5) said that they were involved in directly training the employee when the employment specialist was not at the employment setting. These findings were consistent with Rusch et. al. (1989) in that job site supervisors were directly involved in providing some support.

Only two supervisors indicated that they were actively involved in assisting with work-related activities such as transportation. Accordingly, only 39% of the program personnel indicated that they were fully implementing (56% partially implementing) employment-related services such as transportation, housing, financial aid, and recreation to

promote consumer continuation in the present job placement. These data revealed that consumers received little assistance in arranging necessary life supports that without may have impeded their work performance.

Integration

Physical proximity and interactions with employees without disabilities were the topics of the integration questions. All 15 supervisors indicated that the employees worked alongside employees without disabilities. Over 60% placed high emphasis on appropriate supervisor and co-worker interactions while on the job, and all indicated that the employment specialist assisted in establishing these interactions. Surprisingly, only 40% of the program personnel rated themselves as fully implementing physical and social integration elements.

On-Going Support

The questions of this section focused on supervisor opinions about the on-going support received by the employees after they had stabilized on the job. Over 90% reported that the employment specialist evaluated the employee's performance at least monthly after the employee was trained. All supervisors indicated that they would accept assistance from the employment specialist if the employee's performance dropped or other problems occurred after the employment specialist faded from the job situation. Also, the supported employees received assistance from parents, friends, or relatives. Six supervisors reported that family/friends assisted by calling to indicate absences, five indicated that transportation was provided, two reported that family or friends helped the employee perform the job, and two reported that the employee was assisted with paychecks. On the other hand, using family

supports was rated as fully implemented by only 35% of the program personnel group. Rusch et al. (1989) found that nine of the fifteen supervisors in his study indicated that some employees had family/friends who provided transportation, and two supervisors reported that they would release an employee's paycheck to a family member or friend with written consent from the employee.

Supervisor Satisfaction

Overall, 14 of 15 supervisors were very satisfied or satisfied with the supported employment program. One supervisor stated, "I like the part where I don't have to train." Some supervisors commented that benefits to the company included: "[supported employment is] an answer to the labor crunch" and the supported employee was: "a morale booster for other workers," "reliable, almost always on time," "above average in attendance and dependability; as dependable as our best," "less dependent on social security," "benefits society."

In general, few problems were indicated. The problems mentioned pertained to the qualifications of the employment specialist. One supervisor was concerned that the employment specialist may have been overprotective, but he would not have hired the employee without the support. Another supervisor indicated that perhaps the agency had overloaded the employment specialist with the responsibility of multiple placements at one time. The supervisor felt the employment specialist was not qualified to handle this situation.

The supervisors were asked to make suggestions for improving the supported employment program. Many of them mentioned that small companies could greatly benefit

from the labor force but felt that very few were aware of the program. Better program marketing was suggested. Others indicated that employment specialists should perform the job before the employee begins and should monitor the employee's performance more frequently. All of the supervisors indicated an interest in participating in program business advisory committees, but they were not aware if their agencies had formed these special committees. In comparison, 58% of the program personnel group reported that they did not have an advisory committee with employer, family/caregiver, and consumer representation.

Discussion

The purpose of this report was to provide answers to the three major questions of the study: (a) How do job site supervisors evaluate the implementation of best practices in supported employment?, (b) Do program personnel of supported employment programs agree with supervisors about their implementation efforts?, and (c) What was the overall satisfaction level of job site supervisors toward Tennessee supported employment programs? Overall, the participating supervisors were very satisfied to satisfied with the performance of the supported employees and with the support provided by the employment specialists. Most suggested that the value of supported employment should be marketed across the state, especially to small business owners. The consensus of the supervisors' evaluation was that most of the core components of supported employment as identified in the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1986 were present: ". . . **competitive work** in **integrated** work settings for individuals with severe handicaps . . . who need **on-going support** services to perform such work."

In comparison, the perceptions of the program personnel about their implementation of best practice elements were somewhat different from the job site supervisors. For instance, the supervisors were greatly influenced by the job developer's knowledge about the consumer's abilities; however, program personnel were less positive about the job developer's level of knowledge. Almost all supervisors thought that the consumers had opportunities for pay increases, benefits, and increase in responsibilities; but program personnel were not confident that the developed jobs met these criteria. The two groups appeared to be in agreement about consumer assessment and training in that there was limited activity by the employment specialist in the areas of job analyses and demonstrated knowledge about the job prior to consumer training. The supervisors reported that they would welcome more activity in these areas.

The job site supervisors represented companies of the private for-profit and public sectors who paid the supported employees directly at minimum wage and above. The supported employees were in line for pay increases, benefits, and increased responsibilities as were their counterparts. However, some supervisors perceived that the supported employees were limited to entry-level jobs and did not have an opportunity to advance in the company.

All supervisors reported that the supported employees were physically and socially integrated into the work settings. The employees worked alongside employees without disabilities and socialized during lunch and breaks. The supervisors highly emphasized the importance of appropriate supervisor and employee interactions while on the job.

The results of the study did not reveal to the researchers that consumers with the most challenging severe disabilities were employed by the job site supervisors. This perception is supported by the fact that over 60% of the supervisors did not report any job modifications. The supervisors did convey their willingness to accept professional consultation from the employment specialist to maximize the supported employee's performance. It is well documented in the literature that natural job supports and modifications are effective in assisting consumers with maximum disabilities get and keep their jobs (Moon, S. M., Inge, K. J., Wehman, P., Brooke, V., & Barcus, M., 1990). Before these consumers can reap the rewards of competitive jobs, employment specialists will need to develop skills in this area.

The supervisors confirmed that the supported employees were receiving on-going support. All but 10% reported that the employment specialist evaluated the employee's performance at least monthly after the employee was trained. However, they recommended that visits to the job site should increase. They strongly stated that they would accept assistance from the employment specialist if the employee's performance dropped or other problems occurred.

Over 60% of the supervisors indicated that they were directly involved with delivering job-related activities to the consumer and confirmed that parents, relatives, and friends were involved as well. However, they did not perceive that providing transportation, recreation, and other related activities were a part of their role and functions. In turn, program personnel reported that little effort was placed on assisting employees with these

related activities. Consequently, the implications are that many supported employees have limited assistance in arranging work supports.

Many supervisors commented on the limited qualifications or skills of the employment specialist. They made several suggestions that may improve employee training and job retention: a job analysis should be completed and reviewed by the supervisor before the employee begins, the employment specialist should acquire the skills of the job before training the employee, the employment specialist should receive training in management of multiple site placements, and job fading techniques should be identified and discussed with the supervisor.

Although only 15 supervisors were interviewed in this investigation, the information was crucial to completing a comprehensive evaluation of Tennessee's supported employment program. The results revealed that supervisors do play a "pivotal role" in the success of supported employment. The fact that provider agencies selected the employment setting of the job site supervisors limits the generalization of this study to all supported employment programs in Tennessee. The chance that the results are biased is high; nevertheless, the supervisors were very candid about the program's strengths and weaknesses.

In summary, the supervisors did confirm that consumers with disabilities were working in competitive jobs and were receiving the core services mandated in the supported employment federal and state guidelines. There was some discrepancy between supervisors and program personnel about the implementation efforts, which warrants on-going evaluations of supported employment by supervisors. The supervisors emphasized some areas of weakness (e.g., skilled personnel, program marketing, etc.) that should be addressed

by program managers, staff training personnel, and state policymakers to guide the program from the delivery of basic to quality services.

Implications and Recommendations

Consistent with the status of most states, Tennessee's implementation of supported employment is well underway. Some consumers who have traditionally been employed in sheltered workshops are now competitively employed. To expand this program to include more quality elements and consumers with a full range of disabilities, we must first look at our present accomplishments and problems. Drawing upon our own experiences and the findings of this study, we would like to offer some thoughts and suggestions for future directions and initiatives.

1. Solicit on-going evaluative feedback from employers, at state and program levels, to ascertain the climate (strengths and weaknesses) of the supported employment initiative through program advisory committees and annual evaluations.
2. Target the following topics to be included in training curriculum for employment specialists: consumer interviewing skills, job analyses, acquisition of job requirements by the employment specialist, job accommodations and use of natural supports for consumers with the most challenging severe disabilities, social integration, management of multiple site placements, job fading techniques, and networking with parents/caregivers to arrange on-going job supports.
3. Work toward the goal of creating employment opportunities in the private and public sectors across a variety of job types that have opportunities for advancement.

4. Educate the public and employers about the employment potential of persons receiving supported employment services by conducting such activities as publicizing success stories, producing public service announcements, and developing a directory of employers of supported employees.
5. Promote the inclusion of consumers with the most challenging severe disabilities in competitive jobs by providing professional consultation to employers on supports needed to perform and keep the job, along with job accommodations to enhance job performance.
6. Explore the potential of employers paying for support services provided by the support agency (i.e., contracted training, train the trainers, and sub-contracted transportation services).

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Appendix

Interview Questions and Related Best Practice Elements

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND RELATED BEST PRACTICE ELEMENTS

JOB PLACEMENT

Q-1 What factors influenced your decision to hire a person with handicaps?

a. Program staff presented an image of professional competence.

Element: The agency and its staff present an image of professional competence with a service to sell rather than handicapism and charity.

b. Job developer appeared knowledgeable of the supported employee's abilities.

Element: The person responsible for job development has in-depth knowledge of both the targeted consumer and the training and support procedures available on the job.

c. Program staff would provide training and support.

Element: On-going support is regularly provided to sustain the employee on the job.

d. Job appeared to be compatible with the skills, abilities, and interest of the supported employee.

Element: Job development efforts are directed by the skills, abilities, and interests of the consumer.

Q-2 During the job interview, what characteristics influenced your decision to hire the job applicant?

PAID WORK

Q-3 Does the supported employee have opportunities for advancement, pay increases, benefits, and increases in responsibilities?

Element: Jobs have opportunities for advancement, pay increases, benefits, and increases in responsibilities.

Q-4 What is the average monthly employee retention rate for employees?

Q-5 Is the average monthly retention rate different for the supported employee(s)?

Element: Jobs have a low rate of co-worker and supervisor turnover.

Q-6 Did you pay the supported employee directly or indirectly through an agency contract?

Element: Consumers are paid directly by employers, both a regular and sub-minimum wage.

ASSESSMENT AND TRAINING

Q-7 Was it necessary to modify the job to enhance the supported employee's performance?

Element: Individually-tailored job responsibilities are negotiated for employees

Element: Adaptations and modifications are utilized as needed to perform the job to employer standards (e.g., alternative communication modes, sequencing cards, counting jigs).

Element: Potential job sites are routinely analyzed in relation to the possibility of narrowing or combining existing job responsibilities to suit individual needs.

Q-7b Did the employment specialist discuss the changes in the job with you?

Element: Employer and program staff are in agreement about the consumer's job responsibilities.

Q-7c Would you welcome an evaluation of the job, in relation to the job description, to enhance the supported employee's ability to perform the job?

Element: Detailed job site analysis of all critical work components, work-related routines, and work environments is conducted before employment begins.

Q-8 Did the employment specialist perform the job requirements before the supported employee began work?

Element: Job trainers perform job duties prior to the consumer's first day of work.

Q-9 Did the supported employee receive direct training from an employment specialist until his/her performance met company standards?

Element: Consumers receive direct training in actual situations and environments where skills (work, social, communication) are to be used.

Element: Job trainers utilize training strategies that meet the consumer's needs and ensure that the employer's standards are met (e.g., quality, safety, productivity requirements).

Q-10 Did the job site supervisor directly perform job-related activities during the employee's training? At what level of involvement? (Job-related activities: orientation to the job, direct training, motivating employee, assessing the employee's performance, coordinating work-related activities).

Element: The program identifies employment-related services that can be provided by community agencies to promote consumer continuation in present placement (e.g., transportation, housing, financial aid, recreation, etc.)

INTEGRATION

Q-11 Generally, what opportunity have your supported employees had to be with employees without a handicap?

Q-12 What level of emphasis do you place on employee social-interpersonal interactions with themselves, co-workers, and customers.

Q-13 Did the employment specialist assist the supported employee in establishing positive co-worker and supervisor social-interpersonal interactions?

Element: Physical and social integration opportunities are an integral part of job site analysis.

Element: Training or supporting interactions with non-disabled co-workers is a part of job training responsibilities.

Element: Job trainers facilitate increased co-worker involvement with consumers as they decrease time (fade) at the job site.

ON GOING SUPPORT

Q-14 During training, did the employment specialist obtain feedback from you about the supported employee's performance on a regular basis?

Q-15 After the employee was trained, did the employment specialist obtain feedback from you about the supported employee's performance on at least a monthly basis?

Element: Feedback is obtained on a regular basis from consumers, employers, co-workers, family-caregivers, and others about their satisfaction with the program's support services.

Q-16 If the employment specialist was no longer training the supported employee and his/her performance dropped or other problems occurred, would you accept assistance from the employment program to help the employee do what he/she was originally hired to do?

Element: On-going support is regularly provided to sustain the employee on the job.

Q-17 Do parents or relatives and friends ever assist the supported employee in any manner?

Element: Parents/caregivers are supported in assisting workers in using their pay to purchase recreation activities, to select and buy personal items, and to do banking if necessary.

Element: Family and home supports are used to facilitate employment (e.g., transportation, job development, training).

PROGRAM SATISFACTION AND GENERAL INFORMATION

Q-18 Overall, how satisfied are you with the supported employment program?

Q-19 What have been some of the benefits of supported employment for your business?

Q-20 What are some of the problems that you have had when working with agencies providing supported employment services?

Q-21 Do you have any suggestions that would improve supported employment services?

Q-22 How many employees currently work with you?

Q-23 What position(s) has your supported employee(s) held?

Q-24 Does the supported employment program have a business advisory committee?

Element: An advisory committee has been formed with family/caregiver, consumer, and employer representation.

Parent/Caregiver Perceptions of Best Practices in Supported Employment Programs

Melinda Dukes

Debra Martin Petty

Parent/Caregiver Perceptions of Best Practices in Supported Employment Programs

Adult individuals with disabilities, especially those with moderate or severe mental retardation or mental illness, often require close relationships with their families in order to obtain the support they need for carrying out daily activities. In fact, studies have noted that many individuals with disabilities continue to live in the family home as adults (e.g., Hill, Seyfarth, Banks, Wehman, & Orelove, 1987; Petty, Dukes, & Henderson, 1990). Given this extended close relationship between parents/caregivers and persons with disabilities, rehabilitation service providers have come to realize that the family is an important factor in service effectiveness and positive participant outcomes. Those at the forefront of the supported employment emphasis have not neglected the vital influence of the family. Indeed Beckett and Fluke (1988) noted, "Job opportunities for people with severe disabilities are now being made available through supported employment programs. In order for parents to be effective advocates for their children, they must understand how it works and their concerns must be heard" (p. 24). Hill, Seyfarth, Banks, Wehman, and Orelove (1987) directly addressed the issue by stating that parental attitudes concerning adult services must be fully understood in order for quality adult services to be possible.

Supported employment, as defined by the 1986 Rehabilitation Act Amendments, is work in competitive employment situations for those with severe disabilities who need on-going support services in order to perform that work. Although the role of the family in assisting with supported employment opportunities has not been delineated by the federal government, the importance of the family has been addressed by many in the field.

Family members and caregivers have been found to influence the availability of supported employment (e.g., Schutz, 1986; Sowers, 1989). For instance, Sowers (1989) identified two family roles that are critical to the success of supported employment. The first is to have families choose the supported employment option. Not all parents are convinced that competitive employment is the best option for their family members, as illustrated by a finding of Hill and her colleagues. Hill et al. (1987) found that only 12% of a sample of parents preferred a competitive employment option for their family members who had mental retardation.

The second family role involves the provision of assistance in finding and maintaining jobs. Often families are instrumental in finding jobs for their family members who have disabilities (e.g., Hasazi, Gordon, & Roe, 1985). In addition, many service providers and researchers will attest to the importance of the family in work orientation development (e.g., Kernan & Koegel, 1980), intervention outcome (e.g., Edge, Strenecky, & McLaughlin, 1979; Ferrara, 1979; Goldstein, 1979; Walthal & Love, 1974), and employment success (e.g., Kernan & Koegel, 1980; Koegel, 1978; Nitzberg, 1974) of individuals with disabilities. In that a large number of individuals with disabilities continue to reside with parents—for example, 54.3% of a sample of Tennessee consumers of supported employment services lived with their parents as opposed to 24.5% who lived independently (Petty, Dukes, & Henderson, 1990)—it is clear that the families or caregivers of individuals with disabilities have a strong influence on the services that are provided to these individuals. According to Schutz (1986), available research suggests that supported employment will not succeed without family support.

Concurrent to focusing on the identification of exemplary services or best practices in supported employment programs is the issue of consumer evaluation of such services. Schalock (1988) maintains that evaluation of client-referenced outcomes and community-program interconnection is characteristic of programs at the third evolutionary phase of programmatic development, or the Accountability and Systems Interface phase. Consumer evaluation is vital for determination of the extent to which exemplary or best practices translate into quality program services. The consumers of supported employment services are the program participants, the participants' caregivers, and the employers. Since the caregivers are usually parents or relatives and a large body of work has demonstrated the importance of family support for employment programs, it is essential that caregivers' evaluations of exemplary practices are obtained and examined. Such consumer-level information accelerates the development of quality services and the evolutionary progression of supported employment programs.

The current project sought to determine the degree to which certain identified best practice elements were realized by caregivers as family members participated in supported employment programs. This was done by asking caregivers to rate the presence of elements and also to indicate the importance of the elements judged not present. This research was accomplished in conjunction with the Best Practices in Supported Employment study supported by the Tennessee Developmental Disabilities Planning Council.

Questions guiding the research effort were:

1. What supported employment services did parents or caregivers experience as their family members were involved in Tennessee programs?

2. If parents/caregivers did not experience a service, did they feel that the service would be important to incorporate into supported employment programs?
3. What was the overall satisfaction level of parents/caregivers toward Tennessee supported employment programs?

These questions were addressed by surveying parents/caregivers about the various services they may have experienced as their family members participated in supported employment programs. The survey was part of the Best Practices study conducted in the winter of 1990. The overall purpose of the Best Practices study was to determine Tennessee providers' evaluations of supported employment best practice elements and their perceptions of the degree to which these elements had been implemented. The parent/caregiver survey provided a consumer evaluation of the supported employment services offered in the state.

Method

Respondent Selection

The targeted population for the survey included parents and caregivers of supported employment program participants. No comprehensive listing of this population was available; therefore, the sample was solicited via supported employment service agencies such as community mental retardation agencies, private organizations and mental health centers.

Instrumentation

The Best Practices in Supported Employment Survey - Caregiver Form (BPSE-CF) (see Appendix) was developed as a companion instrument to the Best Practices in Supported

Employment Survey (BPSE) used to survey professionals involved in the supported employment effort. The BPSE was developed by the researchers to evaluate the degree to which Tennessee supported employment programs had incorporated best practice elements of supported employment. These best practice elements had been identified by the researchers through a comprehensive literature search and a Delphi validation technique.

Instrument Construction

The items on the BPSE-CF reflected best practice elements from the BPSE that were considered most relevant for parents/caregivers. A total of 21 elements from the BPSE had been selected as being appropriate for consumer evaluation; two of these were combined resulting in the 20 elements on the BPSE-CF. The response format of each of the elements included three choices: 1 = YES, the service was available; 2 = NO, BUT I THINK THIS IS IMPORTANT; and 3 = NO, the service was not available.

The BPSE-CF also included one item asking how satisfied the parent/caregiver was with current supported employment services and one open-ended item requesting suggestions, comments, or feelings the respondent might have about supported employment. The remainder of the survey consisted of 10 demographic items.

Procedure

Eighteen agencies volunteered to mail out survey packets to parent/caregiver respondents of programs participants who had been in their supported employment programs from July 1, 1989 to December 31, 1989. Data were collected this way in order to protect the confidentiality of the respondents. The agencies were specifically requested to give each

parent/caregiver a survey packet. It was hoped that this would reduce the possibility of the agency biasing the sample by selecting only cooperative parents/caregivers. Although this sample was not random and relied upon the cooperation of both agencies and parents/caregivers, it was the first known sample to provide consumer evaluations of Tennessee supported employment services.

The survey packets given to the agencies included a letter describing the project and requesting the parent/caregiver's participation, a survey form, and a postage paid return envelope. Three weeks following the initial sending of packets, complete packets were sent again to all of the parents/caregivers requesting that the survey be completed and returned.

Results

Return Rate

Of the 103 surveys sent via the agencies, 77 were returned for a 75% return rate. Although a few of the surveys contained some missing data, none of them were significantly incomplete resulting in a 100% useable data rate.

Respondent Characteristics

On the BPSE-CF were questions concerning characteristics of the family member involved in supported employment including gender, age, disability, residential status, and number of years in current supported employment job. The respondents were also asked to describe their relationship to the supported employment family member and their own employment experiences. Data on the characteristics of the family member and the respondents are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1
Family Member Characteristics
N=77

Characteristic	Frequency	Percent*
Gender		
Female	26	34%
Male	45	58%
Age		
17 years or less	--	---
18 - 22 years	7	9%
23 - 30 years	36	47%
31 - 40 years	17	22%
41 years or over	11	14%
Disability		
Mild Retardation	22	35%
Moderate Retardation	13	17%
Severe Retardation	1	1%
Profound Retardation	1	1%
Traumatically Brain-Injured	4	5%
Chronically Mentally Ill	3	4%
Hearing Impaired	1	1%
Visually Impaired	1	1%
Spinal Cord Injury	--	---
Learning Disability	6	8%
Autism	1	1%
Epilepsy	--	---
Cerebral Palsy	1	1%
Alcohol/Substance Abuse	1	1%
Other	5	6%
Residential Situation		
Independently	10	13%
In a Supervised Apartment	14	18%
In a Group Home	8	10%
With Parent(s) or Guardian(s)	6	47%
In a State Residential Facility	1	1%
Other	1	1%
Time Employed		
Less than 1 year	50	65%
1 - 2 years	11	14%
3 - 4 years	4	5%
5 years or more	12	16%

*Missing responses prevent percentages from reflecting entire sample of respondents.

As for the family members participating in supported employment programs, 58% of them were male and approximately 69% were between the ages of 23 and 40 years old. The majority of the family members (53.2%) had a mental retardation diagnosis which included mild (35.1%), moderate (17%), and profound (1.3%); and 46.7% of them resided with a parent or guardian. Living independently and living in a supervised apartment characterized 12.9% and 18.2% of the family members, respectively. Approximately 65% of the family members had been employed for less than a year while 15.6% had been employed for five or more years.

As shown in Table 2, the majority of the survey respondents were female (51.9%) and a parent (51.9%) of the family member in supported employment. Of the remainder of the respondents, 9.1% described themselves as being other relatives (e.g., niece, husband, son, etc.), 9.1% were residential supervisors or monitors, and 9.1% were completing the survey to evaluate their own supported employment experience. Respondents completing the survey as an evaluation of their own supported employment experiences were those who did not have guardians. The respondents were employed mostly in the service sector (22.1%) or were manual workers (24.7%); 23.4% of the respondents were not employed.

What Supported Employment Services did Parents or Caregivers Experience as Their Family Members Were Involved in Tennessee Programs?

Table 3 illustrates the respondents' choices for each of the 20 elements on the BPSE-CF. For 5 of the elements, over 75% of the respondents indicated that each element had been included in the program with which their family member had been involved. For example, 87% of the respondents felt that the program had explained supported employment

Table 2
Respondent Characteristics
N=77

Characteristic	Frequency	Percent*
Gender		
Female	40	52%
Male	26	34%
Relation to Family Member		
Mother or Father	40	52%
Other Relative	7	9%
Legal Guardian	1	1%
Foster Parent	1	1%
Counselor	4	5%
Friend	4	5%
Self	7	9%
Residential Monitor	7	9%
Other	--	---
Employment of Main Wage Earner		
Not Working	18	23%
Farmer or Rancher	1	1%
Protective or Service Worker	17	22%
Manual Worker	19	25%
Clerical Worker	--	---
Business Person	--	---
Proprietor or Manager	4	5%
Professional	5	6%
Other	1	1%

*Missing responses prevent percentages from reflecting entire sample of respondents.

to their satisfaction, and 79.2% indicated that job training at the job site and continued support had been provided for as long as the family member had been employed. The majority of the respondents (77.9%) agreed that the family member had received wages equal to that of others who worked in the same job. In addition, 80.5% indicated that the program provided feedback concerning the family member's performance on the job, and 89.6% responded that the program treated the family member with respect in an age-appropriate fashion.

If Parents/Caregivers did not Experience a Service, did They Feel That the Service Would be Important to Incorporate Into Supported Employment Programs?

Since less than 50% of the respondents chose the "YES" response, for 6 different elements, indicating the element was a part of the program, the response patterns for the "NO" options were examined (Table 3). Over 30% of the respondents chose the "NO, BUT I THINK THIS IS IMPORTANT" option, and 14.3% responded "NO" to the element concerning the presence of an advisory committee consisting of family members, program participants, and employers. The item addressing the transitioning of family members from school systems to supported employment programs was also not endorsed by the respondents as having been available in the programs. Nearly 25% of the respondents who indicated that this element was not a part of the program also responded that it was important, while 22.1% of the respondents indicated that school to supported employment transitioning had not been a part of the program.

The enlistment of parents/caregivers to assist with transportation, job finding, and other job-related activities was rated as not being a part of supported employment programs

Table 3

Parent/Caregiver Responses to Supported Employment Services

	SERVICE	YES (*the service was available*) Frequency	Percent	NO (*but, I think this is important*) Frequency	Percent	NO (*the service was not available*) Frequency	Percent
1.	Supported employment explanation was satisfactory.	67	87%	9	12%	1	1%
2.	Program had an advisory committee.	37	48%	24	31%	11	14%
3.	Program person helped family member move from school to the program.	38	49%	19	25%	17	22%
4.	Program asked for help with transportation, finding a job, etc.	36	47%	9	12%	32	42%
5.	Program helped family member use financial benefits and sources.	38	49%	10	13%	26	34%
6.	Program provided job training and help throughout the employment.	61	79%	3	4%	6	8%
7.	Program found jobs that lasted.	51	66%	7	9%	13	17%
8.	Pay received seemed equal to that of others that worked in the same job.	60	78%	1	1%	8	10%
9.	Program found jobs that allow advancement, pay, increases, etc.	37	48%	16	21%	19	25%
10.	Family member chose preferred job.	35	46%	14	18%	22	29%
11.	Offered jobs were similar to interests, skills, and abilities of family member.	56	73%	10	13%	7	9%
12.	Parent/caregiver opinions on work hours and activities were asked.	41	53%	15	20%	18	23%
13.	Program explained what was being done to find the family member a job.	57	74%	7	9%	11	14%

(Table 3 continues)

SERVICE	YES (*the service was available*) Frequency	Percent	NO (*but, I think this is important*) Frequency	Percent	NO (*the service was not available*) Frequency	Percent
14. Program gave information about things that could be done to encourage/support family members on the job.	40	52%	16	21%	18	23%
15. Program gave parents/caregivers progress reports.	62	80%	5	7%	7	9%
16. Program offered family members other activities during times not employed.	50	65%	13	17%	12	16%
17. Program asked whether or not parents/caregivers were satisfied.	50	65%	13	17%	12	16%
18. Program treated family member with respect and in an age-appropriate manner.	69	90%	2	3%	4	5%
19. Program offered help in finding recreational activities and helping with personal needs.	43	56%	16	21%	15	20%
20. Program helped with use of nonhandicapped transportation.	43	56%	10	13%	21	27%

by 41.6% of the respondents. Only 11.7% of the respondents felt that this was an important service for supported employment programs. As for programs providing assistance with financial benefits and sources to the family members, 33.8% of the respondents chose the "NO" option while 13% indicated that this would be an important program service.

Two elements concerning the quality of the jobs found by programs failed to receive a majority of affirmative responses. For example, 24.7% of the respondents felt that the programs did not find jobs that allow for advancement, pay increases, benefits, and increases in responsibility; 20.8% felt that this is important for quality services. More than a quarter (28.6%) of the respondents indicated that their family members did not get to choose a job while 18.2% indicated that this is important for program services.

An open-ended item aimed at generating additional comments or suggestions from the respondents revealed some of the problems experienced by family members. For example, one respondent indicated that the program did not have experience with the family member's disability and did not understand, "When emotional difficulties caused the family member to leave the job . . . ." Problems with contact and communication between the family and the supported employment programs characterized most of the negative responses.

What was the Overall Program Satisfaction Level of the Parents/Caregivers Toward Tennessee Supported Employment Programs?

One structured item assessed the respondents' level of satisfaction with Tennessee supported employment programs. In addition, many positive comments were generated by the open-ended item requesting additional comments. As for overall satisfaction, 65% of the

respondents indicated that they were satisfied to very satisfied, while 26% responded that they were somewhat satisfied with the family member's supported employment program.

The open-ended item requesting additional information on feelings, suggestions, or comments generated responses from 42 (55%) of the respondents. Of these comments, half of them were generally positive indicating approval of Tennessee supported employment programs. One respondent stated, for example:

> "I like the program because it has helped my family member to learn to do things that even the doctors said she wouldn't learn to do. I should have marked 'Very Satisfied' because if you had seen my family member five years ago and saw her now, you wouldn't think she was the same person. So I'm very thankful for the program."

Some of the positive comments also included suggestions, for instance:

> "The program that is working with this family has been good. Need more job coaches. My daughter more or less was trained by the people she works for and with. They have helped with transportation, etc."

Comments also echoed the concerns of parents/caregivers as illustrated by this statement—"I think this program is good and can help a lot of handicapped persons. I definitely want the support person there with her, though!"

Discussion

Parent/caregiver evaluations of supported employment services are crucial to the continued development of quality services. The obtained information is essential for improving communications and relationships between service providers and caregivers. The ultimate goal of these improved relationships is to gain and develop parent/caregiver commitment to supported employment. As discussed previously, this commitment is crucial to the long-term viability of supported employment due to the strong influence of

parents/caregivers over the vocational and career preparation of their family members with special needs (Schutz, 1986).

This survey obtained the first systematic collection of parent/caregiver evaluations of Tennessee supported employment programs. Accomplished in conjunction with the Best Practices study, this project sought to determine the extent to which exemplary practices had been translated into service components that could be experienced at the consumer level.

Of the 20 best practice elements included on the BPSE-CF, only 6 were rated as being highly characteristic of the programs that the family member had experienced. The support of these elements—sufficient program descriptions given to family and participants, availability of job site training and long term job support, pay equivalent to others in the same job, feedback to family concerning job performance, and respectful treatment of the program participant—indicated that the respondents had experienced services crucial to the start-up of supported employment programs. The fact that elements such as—the presence of a program advisory committee, transitioning assistance from school programs, solicitation of parental participation, and family assistance in using government financial benefits—were generally rated as not being available further suggests that at the time of the survey the supported employment programs were struggling under start-up conditions. These data are consistent with those obtained by the Best Practices study. For example, program personnel evaluated elements concerning collaboration with school programs as being of relative low importance to the delivery of quality supported employment services. This was also true for the element pertaining to the existence of program advisory committees.

The data from this survey illustrate the degree to which parents/caregivers feel certain missing program services are important. The one element not endorsed as being a part of Tennessee programs that also received the highest support as being important was that of the existence of an advisory committee that had family members, program participants, and employers. Once again, this is a service that would be most characteristic of programs in the Accountability and Systems Interface phase (Schalock, 1988). Another service that would be a component of programs in this phase is that of soliciting family members to participate in transportation, job finding, and other job-related activities. Although the parents/caregivers rated this service as not having been widely available in Tennessee programs, they did not indicate that this would be an important part of supported employment services. The fact that parents/caregivers failed to respond that several similar elements were important to quality service delivery suggests that parent/caregiver commitment to supported employment has yet to be fully realized. The program status survey of the Best Practices study suggests that this low level of commitment is something that program personnel understand for they rated resistance to change by consumers' families and caregivers as one of the top five impediments to the success of supported employment.

Although it is evident that parent/caregiver commitment to supported employment is not as strong as needed, there is indication that a number of parents/caregivers in the state have strong positive feelings about supported employment. The written comments clearly state that supported employment provided an invaluable service to many individuals with disabilities. Positive comments concerning the benefits of participating in supported employment included increased self-esteem, confidence, incentiveness to work, etc.

According to the Tennessee Initiative on Employment Project consumer tracking system data, there were over 300 individuals with disabilities participating in supported employment programs throughout the state of Tennessee as of September 1990. A large number of these individuals will continue close relationships with their families, and their employment will be influenced by their parents/caregivers. Although far from being complete, the data from this project document the importance of families to supported employment. Continued consumer evaluation is essential to the progress of supported employment in Tennessee, and the importance of parents/caregivers to the success of this employment option should never be underestimated or neglected.

Implications and Recommendations

Parent/caregiver involvement in supported employment is recognized by both experts in the field and state-level policymakers to be crucial for programmatic success. The current study points out several areas in which future efforts should be directed to improve the active role of parents/caregivers in supported employment. As the involvement of parents/caregivers is strengthened, the likelihood of positive employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities will increase.

It is very important that programs begin to regularly assess the satisfaction of parents/caregivers. It is recommended that this assessment be a part of overall program evaluation and development efforts.

Given evidence that the involvement of parents/caregivers is crucial to the likelihood of positive participant outcomes, it appears that Tennessee supported employment programs could increase the levels of participant employment success by increasing levels of

parent/caregiver involvement. Soliciting families to assist with job hunting, motivating the family member, and transportation is only one way in which parent/caregiver involvement could be increased. Instituting advisory committees that have family member representation would also facilitate commitment to supported employment.

Family members are often reluctant to offer suggestions or support to programs because they perceive program personnel to be the "experts." It may be that training opportunities should be offered to parents to increase their awareness of how to be positively involved in supported employment.

As with the Best Practices Study, written comments on the parent/caregiver survey indicated that supported employment should be more widely advertised. Advertising that demonstrates the benefits of supported employment is necessary for reaching underserved populations and increasing the commitment of parents/caregivers and employers to the success of supported employment.

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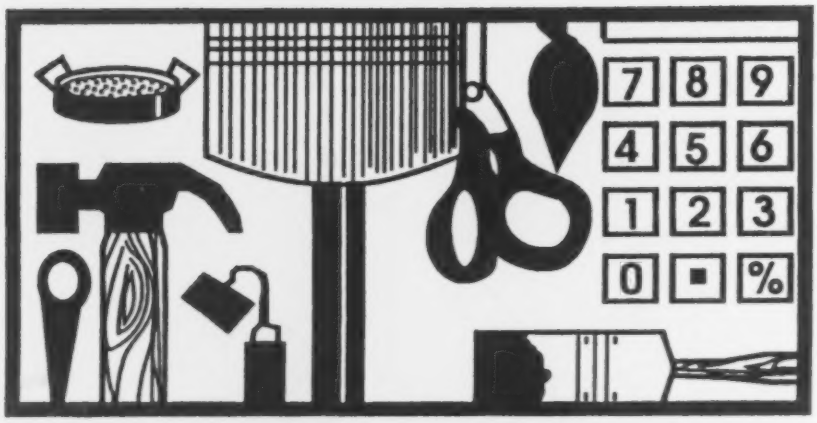
Appendix

Best Practices in Supported Employment Survey Caregiver Form (BPSE-CF)



BEST PRACTICES IN SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

A STATEWIDE SURVEY

This 1990 survey is a statewide effort to determine what parents or guardians think about supported employment services that are available to persons with severe disabilities. Please respond to all of the items. If you wish to comment or qualify your response, please feel free to use the space in the margins. Your comments will be read and taken into account.

"Best Practices in Supported Employment," a part of the Tennessee Initiative on Employment Project, is sponsored by the Tennessee Developmental Disabilities Council, Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, and managed by the University of Tennessee, Memphis - University Affiliated Program.

Thank you for your help.

Please return this survey to:

Tennessee Initiative on Employment Project
483 River Parkway, Suite 2
Sevierville, TN 37862

GENERAL INFORMATION

The purpose of this survey is to find out what services are offered to persons with severe disabilities by agencies providing supported employment services in Tennessee. As you read the following questions, please keep in mind these definitions:

Supported Employment: Paid work in regular, community jobs for persons with severe disabilities who have not been able to work or have not been able to work consistently and who require ongoing support or help while working.

Your Family Member: This phrase is used to address the individual in your family who has a disability that has been involved with or was at some earlier time involved with an agency providing supported employment services. This person's experiences with supported employment is what should be considered when answering the following questions.

DIRECTIONS

Each of the following questions asks about a service or a program that may be offered by supported employment programs. Answer each questions by thinking about what services or programs have been offered by the supported employment program that your family member has been involved in. Please answer by CIRCLING THE ONE BEST RESPONSE.

Q-1 Did the program describe supported employment to your satisfaction and so that you understood what it is?

3 YES 2 NO, BUT I THINK THIS IS IMPORTANT 1 NO

Q-2 Does the program have an advisory committee which has family members, program participants, and employers?

3 YES 2 NO, BUT I THINK THIS IS IMPORTANT 1 NO

Q-3 Did a program person help your family member as he or she moved from school to the program by going to M-Teams and helping with plans?

3 YES 2 NO, BUT I THINK THIS IS IMPORTANT 1 NO

Q-4 Did the program ask you to help your family member with transportation, finding a job, or other job-related activities?

3 YES 2 NO, BUT I THINK THIS IS IMPORTANT 1 NO

Q-5 Did the program help your family member use financial benefits and sources (such as pay, SSI, work benefits, etc.) as much as possible?

3 YES 2 NO, BUT I THINK THIS IS IMPORTANT 1 NO

Q-6 Did the program provide job training at the job site and help for as long as your family member was employed?

3 YES 2 NO, BUT I THINK THIS IS IMPORTANT 1 NO

Q-7 Did the program find jobs that lasted instead of those that were temporary or seasonal?

3 YES 2 NO, BUT I THINK THIS IS IMPORTANT 1 NO

Q-8 Did the pay that your family member received seem to be equal to that of others who worked in the same job?

3 YES 2 NO, BUT I THINK THIS IS IMPORTANT 1 NO

Q-9 Did the program find jobs that allow advancement, pay increases, benefits, and increases in responsibility?

3 YES 2 NO, BUT I THINK THIS IS IMPORTANT 1 NO

Q-10 Did your family member get to choose which job he or she wanted?

3 YES 2 NO, BUT I THINK THIS IS IMPORTANT 1 NO

Q-11 Were the jobs offered by the program similar to the interests, skills, and abilities of your family member?

3 YES 2 NO, BUT I THINK THIS IS IMPORTANT 1 NO

Q-12 Did the program ask you what you wanted as far as work hours and work activities for your family member?

3 YES 2 NO, BUT I THINK THIS IS IMPORTANT 1 NO

Q-13 Did the program tell you what was being done to find the family member a job?

3 YES 2 NO, BUT I THINK THIS IS IMPORTANT 1 NO

Q-14 Did the program give information to you about things that you can do to help encourage and support your family member in his or her job?

3 YES 2 NO, BUT I THINK THIS IS IMPORTANT 1 NO

Q-15 Did the program tell you how your family member was doing on the job?

3 YES 2 NO, BUT I THINK THIS IS IMPORTANT 1 NO

Q-16 Did the program offer your family member other activities during times that he or she was waiting for a job to be developed?

3 YES 2 NO, BUT I THINK THIS IS IMPORTANT 1 NO

Q-17 Did the program ask you whether or not you were satisfied with the services provided?

3 YES 2 NO, BUT I THINK THIS IS IMPORTANT 1 NO

Q-18 Did the program treat your family member with respect and in an age-appropriate way?

3 YES 2 NO, BUT I THINK THIS IS IMPORTANT 1 NO

Q-19 Did the program offer you help in finding recreational activities and helping with other personal needs of your family member?

3 YES 2 NO, BUT I THINK THIS IS IMPORTANT 1 NO

Q-20 Did the program help your family member use nonhandicapped transportation such as public transportation and carpooling?

3 YES 2 NO, BUT I THINK THIS IS IMPORTANT 1 NO

The next two questions ask you about what you think about the program your family member is or was in.

Q-1 Overall, how satisfied are you with your family member's current supported employment program?

1 NOT SATISFIED
2 SOMEWHAT SATISFIED
3 SATISFIED
4 VERY SATISFIED

Q-2 We want to know more about your feelings and ideas concerning supported employment programs. Please use this space to tell us any suggestions, comments, or feelings you may have about supported employment.

Questions 3 - 10 ask for information about you and your family.

Q-3 What is the gender of your supported employment family member?

1 FEMALE
2 MALE

Q-4 What is the age range of your supported employment family member?

1 17 YEARS OR LESS
2 18-22 YEARS
3 23-30 YEARS
4 31-40 YEARS
5 41 OR OVER

Q-5 What is your family member's disability?

1 MILD MENTAL RETARDATION (IQ 55-70)
2 MODERATE MENTAL RETARDATION (IQ 40-54)
3 SEVERE MENTAL RETARDATION (IQ 25-39)
4 PROFOUND MENTAL RETARDATION (IQ 24)
5 TRAUMATICALLY BRAIN-INJURED
6 CHRONICALLY MENTALLY ILL
7 HEARING IMPAIRED
8 VISUALLY IMPAIRED
9 SPINAL CORD INJURY
10 LEARNING DISABILITY
11 AUTISM
12 EPILEPSY
13 CEREBRAL PALSY
14 ALCOHOL/SUBSTANCE ABUSE
15 OTHER (Specify:_____)

Q-6 Where does your supported employment family member live?

1 INDEPENDENTLY (without support from agency)
2 IN A SUPERVISED APARTMENT
3 IN A GROUP HOME
4 WITH HIS/HER OWN PARENT(S) OR GUARDIAN(S)
5 IN A STATE RESIDENTIAL FACILITY
6 OTHER (Please specify:_____)

Q-7 For how many years has your supported employment family member been in his/her current job?

1 LESS THAN 1 YEAR
2 1-2 YEARS
3 3-4 YEARS
4 5 YEARS OR MORE

Q-8 What type of job is held by the main wage earner in your household?

1 NOT WORKING
2 FARMER OR RANCHER
3 PROTECTIVE OR SERVICE WORKER (FIREFIGHTER, POLICE OFFICER, DOMESTIC WORKER, REPAIR PERSON, ATTENDANT, SALES PERSON, ETC.)
4 MANUAL WORKER (LABORER, CARPENTER, ETC.)
5 CLERICAL WORKER (OFFICE WORKER, SECRETARY, TYPIST, ETC.)
6 BUSINESS PERSON (OUTSIDE SALES, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE, BANKER, ETC.)
7 PROPRIETOR OR MANAGER
8 PROFESSIONAL
9 OTHER (Please specify:_____)

Q-9 What is your gender?

1 FEMALE
2 MALE

Q-10 What is your relationship to the supported employment family member asked about in these questions?

1 MOTHER OR FATHER
2 OTHER RELATIVE (Please specify:_____)
3 LEGAL GUARDIAN
4 FOSTER PARENT
5 COUNSELOR
6 FRIEND
7 OTHER (Please specify:_____)

Please take a few minutes and check that you have responded to all the items on every page. Once you have completed the survey, please refold it and mail it in the enclosed postage-paid envelope.

Your contribution to this effort is greatly appreciated. If you would like a summary of results, please print your name and address on the back of the return envelope (NOT on this survey). We will see that you get it.

ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for the Future of the Tennessee Supported Employment Initiative

Debra Martin Petty

Recommendations for the Future of the Tennessee Supported Employment Initiative

The purposes of the Best Practices in Supported Employment study were to: a) assess the state and local status of the supported employment initiative; b) determine the perceptions of supported employment personnel toward the importance and implementation of best practice elements in supported employment; and c) ascertain the opinions of supported employment customers—parents/caregivers and job site supervisors—about the implementation of best practices by supported employment programs. The papers of this monograph contain data analyses that attempt to address the purposes of this study as well as provide a discussion of issues that were identified. Specific recommendations are included in each paper for expanding and improving Tennessee's supported employment services.

This paper includes a summary of our accomplishments to date; a description of issues identified by the respondents of the study; and some thoughts, views, and recommendations for the future of supported employment for Tennesseans with severe disabilities. It is hoped that this study will provide policymakers, service providers, and others with baseline information which describes the successes as well as identifies the shortcomings of the supported employment initiative.

Accomplishments

The accomplishments of the Tennessee Supported Employment Initiative may be attributed to interagency collaboration and local level philosophical commitment that was spurred on by federal guidelines and resources. Our state was not among the 27 states that received systems change grants from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) in 1985 "to

modify or change existing adult day programs for persons with severe handicaps from 'traditional services' to include supported employment options" (RSA, 1990). As RSA intended, the annual allotments for the Title VI, Part C formula-based State Supported Employment Services program have been used by the Tennessee Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) as an initial base for starting up programs and there has been continued growth through the utilization of DRS Title I funding. DRS has used the Title VI-C formula-based program to leverage the provision of extended services. A most important feature of supported employment is the extended services provided to the consumer after the period of vocational rehabilitation agency support has elapsed. In cooperation with DRS, the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation has made provisions for long-term support.

As depicted by this study, Tennessee's supported employment effort has been in a start-up phase; the first wave of services has been established. During start-up we accomplished a great deal on a very "lean" statewide budget. These accomplishments included:

1. Many persons with disabilities have entered the rehabilitation system for the first time and have moved from traditional sheltered employment to obtain integrated, competitive jobs.
2. Fifty community agencies across the state are offering supported employment to over 300 participants.
3. DRS Title I monies are being utilized to expand the program.

4. State agency plans include goals to make supported employment available among the array of vocational options for persons with severe disabilities.
5. Some supported employment staff receive in-service training and technical assistance from private organizations and state agencies.
6. The Tennessee Initiative on Employment (TIE) Interagency Management Team has effectively communicated and collaborated to promote integrated employment opportunities since 1985.
7. A data management information system, developed by the TIE Project, is in place which provides quarterly reports on employment outcomes of consumers in supported employment.
8. Transportation needs have been identified by the University of Tennessee Transportation Research Center and effective demonstration projects are being proposed to address this major integrated employment barrier.
9. In some communities, transitioning from school to work or to supported employment programs has become an intrical component in the operations and curricula of schools and community adult service agencies.

Issues

Our accomplishments are many, but there remains a significant amount of work to be done to more fully incorporate supported employment into the array of vocational options available to **all** Tennesseans with severe disabilities. Several unresolved issues surfaced in the Best Practices Study that we must address to provide quality work and life opportunities

for the individuals we serve. This section of the paper addresses these issues and emerging national trends.

1. Limited resources and activity have been earmarked for building consensus and commitment for supported employment among providers, parents, advocates, consumers, employers, the legislature, and the general public. Building consensus through public information and dissemination mechanisms has been a major thrust for the 27 states with systems change grants. Without the influx of start-up funds, Tennessee has targeted most of its resources for direct services. The results of this study clearly indicated that the respondents were very interested in becoming more involved in the supported employment effort and recommended more program marketing.
2. All groups of the study endorsed the importance of the best practice elements; presently there is limited implementation of these practices. The programs have focused on start-up— establishing resources, staff, relationships with rehabilitation counselors, consumer referrals, job development—and complying with DRS supported employment guidelines. The respondents reported limited activity in areas that are typically associated with the next level of program development, the Systematic Phase: school collaboration, program planning (e.g., establishing program advisory committees), internal and external program evaluation, solicitation of parent participation, including the consumer in program planning and decision-making activities, etc.

3. Individuals with mild and moderate mental retardation or mental illness are the primary participants of supported employment. Few individuals with the most challenging disabilities (i.e., severe and profound mental retardation, cerebral palsy and other physical disabilities, traumatic brain injury, sensory impairments, autism) have participated to date. Limited ongoing support funding has seriously hindered their participation in a program that was intended to meet their needs. Other factors contributing to their lack of participation may be limited personnel skilled in meeting their specific employment needs and the lack of a state initiative to assist rehabilitation counselors and agency staff recognize the potential of individuals with the most severe disabilities.

4. Tennessee is experiencing a slow conversion from day vocational services to supported employment. It appears that the general consensus about the meaning of "conversion" in Tennessee and across the nation is that supported employment is a viable option among an array of vocational services for persons with severe disabilities to obtain integrated, competitive jobs. As an option, the number of supported employment participants pales in comparison to the number of individuals participating in adult day services. A serious disincentive for agencies to offer supported employment or increase their program volume is the limited provision of long-term support funding. In FY 1989-90, the Division of Mental Retardation offered an incentive plan to agencies to convert existing day slots into follow along slots. However, at the present time, agencies are left with the responsibility of generating their own long-term funding which is a requirement

of supported employment. In many programs, the employment specialist may operate a one person program and is responsible for recruitment, job development, job training, case management, and follow along services. Consequently, the consumers may receive limited long-term support.

5. Few students with disabilities are transitioning into supported employment from secondary special education. In some communities, the special education Multidisciplinary Team involves the parents, rehabilitation counselor, and adult service agency representative in developing a transition plan during the students' last school year. This plan is a communication vehicle between the school and the adult agency that is intended to provide the student with a smooth transition into supported employment. However, transition planning is not occurring in the state at large. As a result, there is a time lapse between the students' employment training provided by the schools and their entry into supported employment.
6. There is limited parental commitment to their family member's involvement in supported employment and little program solicitation of parents in planning and delivering their family member's employment activities. Gaining and developing parent/caregiver commitment to supported employment is crucial to the long-term success of their family member in a competitive job and to the viability of supported employment.
7. A national trend has emerged which emphasizes the provision of high quality integrated employment services. Focal to this trend are issues pertaining to:
   - Consumer empowerment - Are consumers given the opportunity to decide if they want to participate in supported employment, the type of job they would

like to work in, the type and amount of support they think they need, if they want to terminate their job, etc.? Are they involved in state and local supported employment planning and decision-making activities?

- Career enhancement - For the most part, basic supported employment outcomes are being realized by supported employees—receiving the prevailing wage and working at least 20 hours in an integrated setting. To provide quality services certain questions must be addressed: Do supported employees have opportunities for advancement in the company? Are they receiving fringe benefits? Are they obtaining higher wages and more working hours? Are they socially participating in their jobs and community, or is there a feeling of social isolation?

Recommendations

The results of the Best Practices Study provide an initial basis for determining the status of supported employment in Tennessee. While there were no answers to confounding issues, the responses are indicative of our accomplishments to date and future obstacles to program success. Drawing upon our own experiences and the findings of this study, we would like to offer some thoughts and suggestions for future directions in the provision of quality supported employment for persons with severe disabilities:

1. Work toward a clear understanding of the intent of supported employment federal regulations and common implementation of the state guidelines. Develop uniform supported employment standards that promote the provision of quality practices.
2. Focus on establishing state and local service linkages among vocational, education, special education, and adult service systems for students with severe disabilities transitioning from school to work who require ongoing support to maintain integrated employment.

3. Promote the inclusion of all Tennesseans with severe disabilities in supported employment programs by developing guidelines for rehabilitation counselors and supported employment providers to assist them in: identifying appropriate supported employment consumers, determining the ongoing support needs of consumers, and recognizing the supported employment potential of individuals with the most severe disabilities (Wehman, 1990).
4. Develop strategies for establishing a stable ongoing support funding system by exploring sources that have been identifed by other states such as Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS) and Impairment-Related Work Expenses (IWRE) under the Social Security Act, Medicaid Waivers for waiver-eligible consumers, special state appropriations for specific groups of individuals and private organizations such as United Way (RSA, 1990).
5. Establish public information and dissemination mechanisms that relate the importance of supported employment and the employment potential of persons with severe disabilities.
6. Continue to work with regional and county service system personnel to help them develop, promote, support, and fund innovative supported employment options.
7. Gain and develop commitment to supported employment by involving parents, advocates, individuals with disabilities, service providers, employers, and other related groups in state and local planning and decision-making activities. Possible activities include developing a state coordinating committee that

c. Complete a Benefit/Cost Analysis to measure the quality of supported employment services in terms of the total costs and benefits with emphasis on how the program has affected individuals employed as a result of the program.

d. Continue to evaluate the status and benefits of supported employment by obtaining Satisfaction Ratings from policymakers, professionals, employers, parents, and consumers.

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